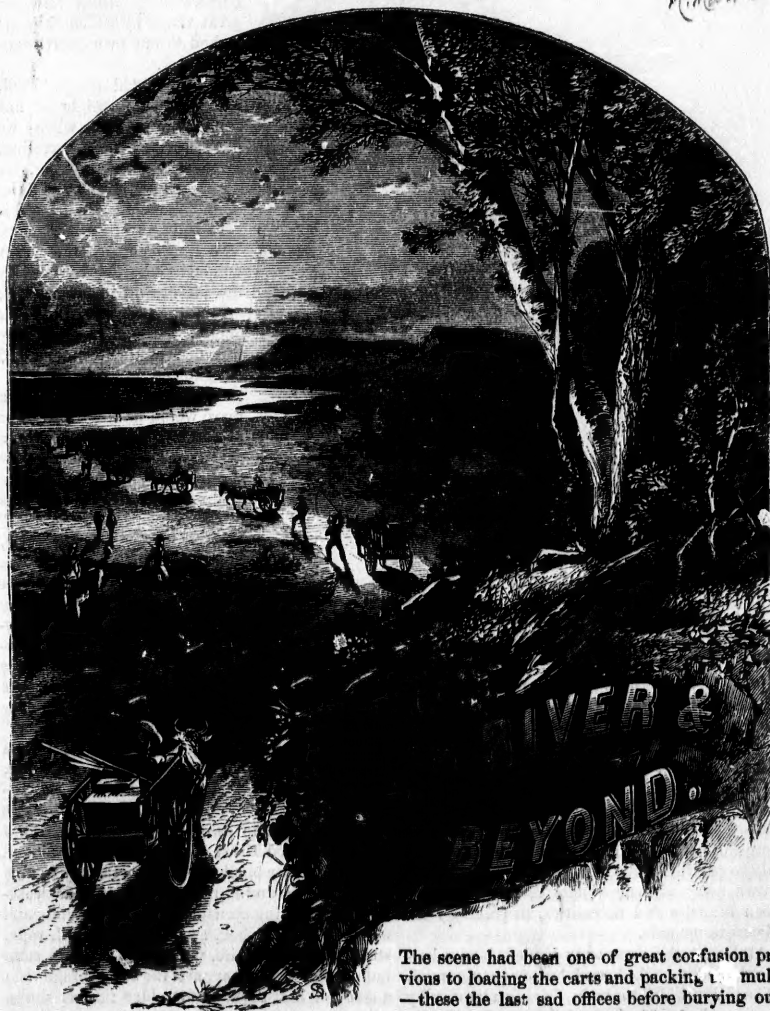


HARPER'S NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

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[First Paper.]

M. Marble



OUR expedition, on the afternoon of the 10th of June, left the hill back of the apostolic capital of Minnesota, where the tents had been pitched and the messes made up the night before.

The scene had been one of great confusion previous to loading the carts and packing the mules—these the last sad offices before burying ourselves in the prairies of the Northwest out of sight of civilization. Crowds of citizens from St. Paul and vicinity were present during the ceremony. All about the camp-ground were scattered our provisions, sacks of flour and sugar

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CASCADE NEAR ST. PAUL.

and beans, barrels of pork and bags of dried beef, bags of dried apples and sacks of coffee, canisters of tea and kegs of powder, bags of shot and chunks of lead, rifles, shot-guns, and pistols, blankets—blue, red, white, and green; fishing-rods, pack-saddles, cart-harness, tents and tent-poles, tin kettles, iron saucepans, tin plates, carpet-bags, valises, soap-boxes, axes, and buffalo-ropes, butcher-knives and spy-glasses, and a hundred things besides—some useful and some useless—relics of civilization which now lie scattered along the valley of the Red River of the North and the prairies of the Saskatchewan, one by one thrown away as their owners drew the line between luxuries and necessities, in passing from citizens to nomads.

At length the carts were loaded, horses harnessed, mules packed, and horsemen mounted. "The Colonel" led the train, driving a light sulky carrying the odometer and other scientific instruments. Balking horses were spurred up, refractory mules flogged, and amidst hundreds of "Good-byes," "Write me from Frazer River," "My compliments to the Saskatchewan," "Send back the biggest nuggets you find," "Let me give you a pass over the Rocky Mountains," one after another wheeled into line, and the expedi-

tion was fairly started on its long journey.

Three-fourths of our twenty were bound to Frazer River to dig for gold; the rest were in search of treasures of another sort—health, knowledge, a summer's recreation, science, personal inspection of the Northwestern areas and the great rivers by which they are linked to our own Northwestern States.

We outfitted at St. Paul, and spent a fortnight of fine summer weather, when we ought to have been traveling, in making our purchases, beginning with horses. [Eulogy of Western horse-jockeys is here omitted for want of room. The sentiments of the writer will be intelligibly conveyed by the picture on the next page, containing portraits of animals offered for our purchase by members of that virtuous and enlightened profession.]

My friend Joseph bought a mare whom he conceived to be profoundly penetrated with a grave consciousness of the part she was performing in opening an international highway across the continent. "Observe," said he, "the pensile head, the meditative, lacklustre eye, the impressive solemnity of her slowly measured tread. See

how she restrains the natural levity of her disposition, and represses that exuberance of animal spirits which one might expect from a horse in the very blush and dew of equine adolescence—for the man I bought her of swore she was only six years old. Let her be called Lady Mary." For my own part, I bought a horse of Indian origin and aboriginal habits—lazy, tough, balking, jocose, sagacious, and of a conservative habit—afterward called "Dan Rice." Together we bought a mule to draw our kit and cargo in a cart of the Red River pattern. Each of us had an India-rubber blanket, two pair of heavy woolen blankets, arms and ammunition, fishing-tackle, besides the cooking utensils, compass, hammer and nails, pail, water-keg, axe, scythe, shovel, rope, string, and jack-knife, which we owned in common. For wearing apparel the best average was: a soft felt hat, three or four blue flannel shirts, with three or four pockets in each. A full suit of Canada blue or stout doeskin, with an extra pair of trowsers. One pair of duck cloth overalls. Boots or high shoes, with projecting soles to keep the prairie-grass from cutting through the uppers.

Whoever goes to Frazer River hereafter by the northern overland route will please listen to two



HORSE-JOCKEYING.

items of advice, or skip to the next paragraph. Item first—the same which *Punch* gave to a young couple about marrying—"Don't!" But if he insists upon going—item second—let him not travel five hundred miles north with loaded carts before beginning on his half-continent of westing. Messrs. Burbank and Blakely, of St. Paul, have had a line of stages this summer from that city to the head of navigation on the Red River of the North; and the steamboat *Anson Northup*, owned by them in shares with the Hudson's Bay Company, now connects that terminus with the Selkirk Settlement. Let the emigrant outfit at St. Paul, send his provisions to Fort Gary by the route named, and there buy carts and fresh horses and make an early start.

It was a motley crowd. There was the man of monstrous egotism, who passed his life in the contemplation and exposition of his own achievements and virtues, and men of no virtue at all; the enthusiast, and the man who ridiculed all enthusiasm; the man who believed every thing, and the man who believed nothing; men of good principle, men of bad principle, and men of no principle; scholars and ignoramuses; industrious men and lazy men; sick men, who could be floored with a rush, and well men that a bull would hesitate before trying to butt over; water drinkers and whiskey drinkers; men that were boys, and boys that were men; Nova Scotians and Indian half-breeds, Scotchmen and Canadians, English, American, and Irish; and but three tents-ful in all.

There were with us two doctors, to look after our healths, and an accomplished scientific gentleman, a geologist and botanist, who afterward

descended the Assiniboine River from Fort Ellice, in a canoe, with only a single Indian guide, ascertaining the navigability of the stream in the spring of the year to small boats, and in nearly all seasons to batteaux—one of the few results accomplished by the expedition.

Our first day's journey was a very short one. Horses and mules had to be weaned from the quotidian oats of civilization, and taught to reconcile themselves to grass and water. The fatigues of the journey had to be begun *adagio*, and then *crescendo*. A *sforzando* movement at the start would have knocked them up in a week.

We, too, had to be weaned. We found this out at the first camping-ground. Instead of ringing for coals and ordering a chop, we had to chop our wood and build our fires and fry our own pork. The streams, which are the Crotons and Cochitnates of the prairies, had to make connection with our temporary houses by wooden pails instead of iron pipes, and we to learn how much easier it is to reach a bell-rope and turn a faucet than to be hewers of wood and drawers of water.

Riding in the sun and the labor and excitement of starting had given us the appetites of Brobdignagians. Visions of savory-messes, clouds of fragrant steam, in which Soyer the immortal seemed enjoying perpetual apothecosis, floated through our minds as we pitched the tents and drove their stakes, stacked the guns and spread our blankets for the night, and then waited and listened for the call to supper. Presently it came, and in the one word "*Grab!*" and grub it was. The tea, virgin as when gathered in the gardens of the celestials, had impart-



RED RIVER GUIDE.

ed none of its virtue to the ravishing hot water, and the decoction which we poured into our tin cups from the new tin tea-pot deserved no better name than hot slops. We asked for bread and received a stone, or at least something so compact, solid, and yet springy, that if it could be produced in sufficient quantities it might supersede the pavements of New York, with danger to horses, profit to the contractor, and addition to the general filth—the three essentials. Fried salt pork was the *pièce de résistance*.

These were our bad beginnings, however. We had not then got into the region of game. Subsequently we had bread as light and good as could be desired, and banqueted on flesh, fish, and fowl of an infinite variety. Even Delmon-

ico denies you the pleasure which we had—of shooting your own bird, picking, dressing, and salting it, and impaling the cadaver upon a sharp stick, there to broil over the coals of the camp-fire into exquisite yellows and browns. And a venison steak with the cosliest accompaniments, in a four-walled restaurant, is not to be preferred to a buffalo steak at supper, bought by a four-mile chase. Nor did bread and pork and tea comprise all our bill of fare. Some of the nomads whom civilization was sloughing off still clung to the fare to which they had been accustomed; and visitors came, bringing in secret pockets mysterious black bottles, containing, if all we have heard is true, chalk, marble dust, opium, tobacco, henbane, oil of vitriol, copperas, alum, strychnine, and other exhilarating beverages.



THE TRAVELER'S HOME.

Stages and teams continually passed us, and our camp-life as yet lacked the seclusion which gives it its charm. Some of us were even weak enough to prefer the white sheets and linen pil-

low-cases of civilization to the blankets of barbarians, and generally found our way at sundown to some inn.

Still, along this crowded thoroughfare, and

with these dilutions of camp-life, we met with some sharp contrasts. My sketch-book contains, upon consecutive pages, a picture of the Astor-like "Fuller House," at St. Paul, where I slept one night, and the "Traveler's Home," where I asked for "something to eat" on the next day.

Our road passed over two tributaries of the Mississippi—Elk River and Rum River. Spring freshets had carried away their bridges, and we crossed by means of temporary rope ferries. Over Rum River ferry, near Anoka, we were carried free. Enterprising citizens reasoned with the owner of the boat, whether patriotically or numismatically I know not, and brought him to a sense of his condition as one of the pioneers of the great Northwest Exploring Expedition. That body, when it had crossed, organ-



FERRY OVER RUM RIVER.



ONE OF OUR DOCTORS.

ized itself into a convention and passed the following resolutions:

"Whereas, the kindness of the citizens of Anoka we have been over Rum River free,

"Resolved, That we tender them our heartfelt thanks:

"Resolved, That we are deeply sensible of the able and skillful manner in which the ferryman managed his pole, and his assistant the rudder, in the trying transit of Rum River;

"Resolved, That we are devoutly grateful that the rope did not break and leave us to the mercy of winds and waves;

"Resolved, That we cordially unite in recommending to Charon, the proprietor of the Styx ferry-boat, to refrain from demanding the usual two oboli from the citizens of Anoka and the ferryman of Rum River."

These resolutions were adopted *nem. con.* The chairman was about to put the motion to adjourn to a quarter where the rum was not so liberally diluted as in the stream just crossed, when the gentleman who had offered the resolutions stepped on top of a pile of flour-sacks in his cart and exclaimed,

"Mr. Chairman, before we adjourn allow me to make a few brief remarks on a subject in which we are all deeply interested. Need I say that I allude to the great Northwest Exploring Expedition?" [Hear! hear! Go on! go on! Three cheers for the Saskatchewan.]

The exigencies of space compel the omission of the speaker's apology for a want of preparation for the occasion and his brilliant exordium. The following extracts are taken from the man-

uscript which he drew from his pocket a few moments later. I have endeavored to relieve the dryness of his discourse by interpolating a few sketches of the members of our party, as they appeared at various points of the journey.

"The discovery of gold in Frazer River and its tributaries depopulated many of the small towns of California in a few short weeks. Tracts of land, once thickly settled and well tilled, were emptied of inhabitants and left as free of the plow as they were before gold was discovered in that El Dorado. Emigrants came from the East too, but passed on by the Golden Gate and entered the Straits of Juan de Fuca on their way to the newer and more northern El Dorado. Shall we wonder, then, that the Californians have said Frazer River is a humbug? Nay, rather let us rejoice. Shall any croaker say we count our eggs before they are hatched? Perhaps we do; but it is because the eggs are golden ones, and we are sure of our goose. . . .

"But the emigration is already sufficient to make the question of routes all important. Some may like to go around the Horn, but not a Western man; that is not his way of treating horns. Who wants to be huddled like cattle between the decks of a rickety old steamer for weeks and months? Who wants to go from London to Paris by the way of Jericho? The best gold fields are in the head waters of Frazer River, close to the Rocky Mountains, just over the way. We take the short cut. . . .

"To use the words of a distinguished writer: 'Various causes have been approaching their crisis of consequence with a remarkably synchronous movement.' The license of the Hudson Bay Company has just expired. The land which they have shut out the world from is open to capital and labor. British Columbia has been organized. People are hearing of the northward deflection of the isothermals west of the great lakes. Bulwer's prophecy, of a cordon of free States all along our northern boundary, may yet be realized. Ten years ago who knew that northwest of Chicago lies an inhabitable area bigger than the whole United States east of the Mississippi, included between the same lines of latitude which box the great grain-growing districts of Central Europe? Japan is opening, and the Amoor gapes to receive her coming thousands. Oregon and Washington Territories are swelling into magnificence, and the eyes of wide-awake philosophers already see in the Northern Pacific the Mediterranean of the future. . . .

"And what a magnificent river system is that of the Northwestern areas—a system by itself! Think me not stupid because I am statistical.

The Red River of the North hooks its head waters in among the head waters of the Mississippi. Then it sends its waters hundreds of miles north to Lake Winnipeg, the centre of the system. That lake is two hundred miles long, navigable for any class of vessels. Its main tributary is the Saskatchewan [cheers], navigable to the very shadows of the Rocky Mountains. Of this country, big enough to make half a dozen first-class States, Red River is the syphon, and Minnesota is the reservoir that its wealth will always flow into. Minnesota, too, gentlemen, as my friend Lieutenant Maury says, is the centre of the Northern thermal band—the temperate zone, the zone of commerce, manufactures, industrial activity, and the wealth and power of the globe. England, France, Russia, Germany, the New England, Middle, and Northwestern States lie in it; the whole valley of the St. Lawrence and the great basin of the Saskatchewan lie in it. The climatic associations of this belt, upon the eastern side of the basin of the great lakes, have formed the elements of the popular delusions regarding the climate of the region to the west and northwest of us. But how absurd is the deduction! The same argument proves that the vine-clad hills of France are no better than the banks of Newfoundland, and Central Europe as bleak and cold as our stormy Labrador. Science and observation tell us that the western coasts of continents are warmer than the eastern in the same latitude, and the northwestern areas of our continent will yet be settled with a population such as it deserves."

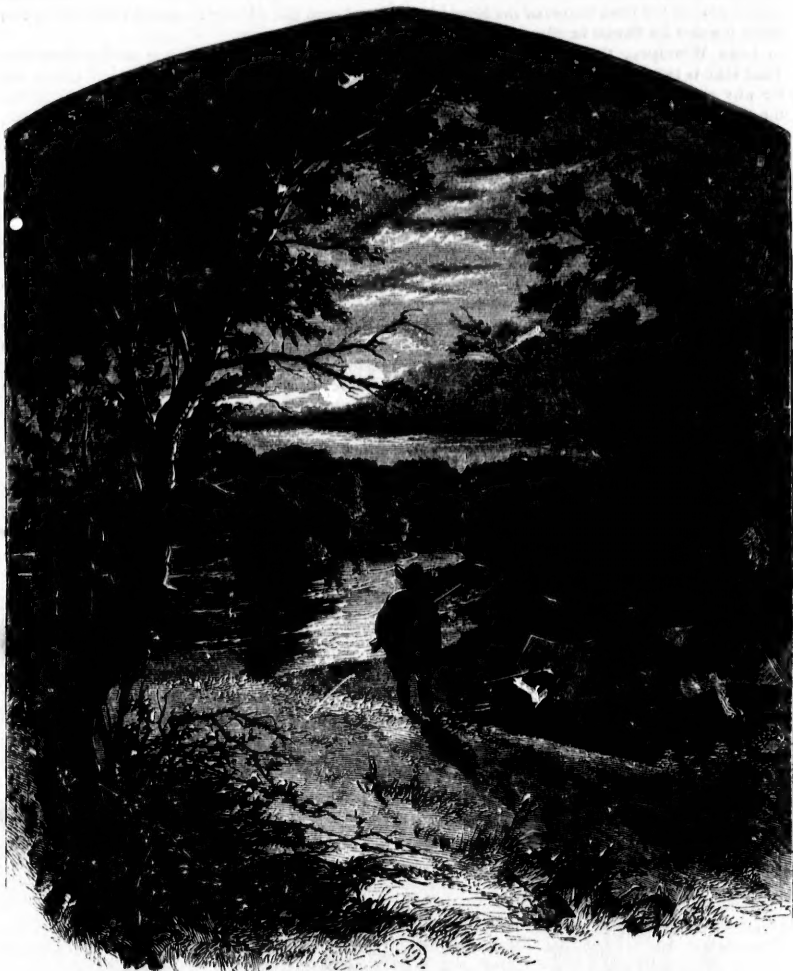
The orator, dismounting from his throne, was saluted with three cheers. The wit of the party

called for "Hail Columbia" from the thermal band, and the twenty mounted their horses and carts and drove on.

The day's programme soon settled down into this routine: The morning watch called the cooks of the three messes at sunrise, and the cooks called their messes half an hour later. After ablutions, which were performed in proximate tin basins or distant brooks, breakfast was laid upon the ground and eaten. The interval, till seven or eight o'clock, was generally given to miscellaneous matters, horses needing to be shod, harness to be mended; tents to be struck, journals to be written up, etc. At half past seven the animals which had been unpicked at sunrise by the morning watch were brought up, harnessed and saddled, and at about eight the expedition started on its day's journey. We rested an hour or half-hour at noon, and went into camp at four. The variations upon this plan became numerous as we journeyed on. Sometimes a deep stream was to be crossed, which occupied half the day, during which the horses rested, and could, therefore, travel later. Sometimes the greater part of a day's journey was through marshes, or the road was bad and full of sloughs, which wearied the horses: in this case we went into camp earlier. But the principal cause of variation came to be the nearness of wood and water. These words gradually changed their original signification into a much broader one, in our minds. Wood once meant the stuff floors and doors and desks are made of, and water was merely one of a great variety of fluids. Now wood and water became essentials to us. We must have them or go supper-



OUR NATURALIST STUDYING GRASSES.



MY FIRST WATCH.

less to bed, and start breakfastless in the morning. They stood instead of a hundred things, and were, to use the phrase of a philosopher, the fundamental data of life. By them we lived, and moved, and had our being.

On coming to the camp-ground the horses were at once unsaddled and the mules unharnessed, all watered and turned out to graze till twilight, when they were picketed for the night. The tents were pitched, wood cut, and water brought for the cooks, who set forth their tins, built the fires, and proceeded to business. After supper, the watch, who was on duty from sunset till midnight, built smudges for the animals, saw they were properly picketed, and began his rounds.

The blankets were spread in the tents, the tents smudged or mosquito nets hung, and at dark nearly all were asleep. A few lingered around the camp-fire telling stories of home, singing songs and choruses, and smoking their pipes; but soon they, too, joined the sleepers.

My first watch happened to fall while we were camped on the east bank of the Mississippi. It was the morning watch, from midnight to sunrise. A cool wind, inexpressibly refreshing after the heat of the day, blew the blanket from my shoulders as I stepped out of the tent at the call of the first watch. Over the whole sky clouds were flying to the south, in thick billows, through the upper air, and in whiter flecks of foam below.

In the west the full moon was going down, now completely hidden from the sight, and now bursting through the rifts with a sudden light. In these moments the white tents gleamed, and the thick darkness which hung over the river, the forests of trees upon its western bank, and upon the islands between, suddenly passed away, revealing their sharp outline against the sky, the rounded graceful masses of foliage, broken by here and there a giant trunk leafless, the memorial of some storm and its swift lightning stroke. Long, deep shadows stretched across the river almost to the hither shore, and where the moonlight shone fair and clear, the rapid current of the river, whose waters the north wind seemed hurrying on to their southern gulf, was transformed to bridges of light, and the illusion hardly passed away until a raft came floating down the stream out of the darkness, a single form visible upon its wrinkled surface, his hand upon the huge paddle guiding its course through the windings of the channel as it swayed from shore to shore.

St. Cloud, seventy-five miles north of St. Paul, the northern limit of the second stretch of continuous navigation on the Mississippi, was our first station. Six or seven years ago there was nothing there but the forest primeval and a cabin or two. Now there is a capital hotel, the Stearns House, two or three churches, a hospital of the Sisters of Mercy, and houses for a thousand people. The west bluff of the river, where St. Cloud stands, is high and steep, the prairie stretching back of it level. From various points on this bluff the river views are beautiful, especially the one looking north to Sauk Rapids, two or three miles above.

The greatest institution, the peculiar one of St. Cloud, I have failed to mention—the St. Cloud newspaper. Joseph and I called upon its editor, the well-known Mrs. Swisshelm, and were permitted to see the most northwestern printing office of the cis-montane States. We found the reputed ogre a large-eyed, lively little woman, with a masculine and unhandsome breadth and height of forehead, wearing a plain brown Quakerish dress, and occupied in sewing together a carpet for the principal room in her new house, just finishing and adjoining the old one. She was very busy, and therefore kept her position on the floor and went on with her work, telling us, however, that she was glad we came, begging us to go on and talk, but launching her bark in the current of conversation before we had knocked away the shores of our own. She was absorbent and capacious of information, uniting the professional inquisitiveness of the reporter with the friendly curiosity of her sex. Her comments were shrewd and her talk often witty. Presently she left her work and took us into the printing-office and sanctum. The latter was a small apartment partitioned off from the main room, long and narrow. In one corner stood the editorial desk, with a pile of exchanges surmounted by the professional scissors and paste-pot. She had been compelled to use the sanctum as a liv-

ing room also. At the right stood a table with the dishes laid for tea, and close at the left a cooking stove loaded with tea-pot, frying-pan, and kettles. Every thing appeared in confusion in this sanctum; for it was not large enough to swing a cat comfortably in, and yet was crowded with the miscellaneous contents of an editorial office, a kitchen, and dining-room, and served, besides, as the passage-way to the larger room beyond. In this room were the hand-press and stands of type, one or two half-made-up forms and half a dozen galleys rested on the table, while the walls were adorned with posters announcing horse sales, houses to rent, etc. A window was broken, and the floor littered. Leaning against the form-table in this dingy room, the brave woman told us how she had learned to set type herself, and then taught boys to; how she made up the forms; how she had got along with a stiff-necked and rebellious people; how she had enjoyed her persecutions and mild martyrdom; how she had endured the *res anguste domi*, and, like all the rest of us workies, had nearly died in getting a living.

We had a supper that night—not but what, in the ordinary conditions of the exchequer, most of us were sure of three meals a day; but this was a particular and public supper. For my part, I remember nothing of it except that the presiding officer was C. C. Andrews, immortalized in “The Red River Trail,” a lawyer who is making his mark in the northwest, and that, after his sensible brief speech, somebody got up and told who built the first wagon in Minnesota, and somebody else expressed the opinion that the head of navigation on the Mississippi was not St. Paul, nor S’n’anthony, nor St. Cloud, but Fort Edmonton on the Saskatchewan.

On Monday, June 20, the train struck its tents and left St. Cloud; here beginning its experiences of camp-life with a back-ground. So far we had been treading the warp and woof of civilization—now we began to slip off the fringes of its outermost skirts. Our direction was northwest, by the valley of Sauk River, through the lake district of Middle Minnesota to the head of navigation on Red River. Such articles as were needed had been added to our outfit, including a boat to cross streams in, which served for a wagon box on dry land. The second day out all our horses and mules ran away before breakfast. Half the camp scoured the country in every direction in search for the runaways. They were caught four miles away, making steady tracks for St. Cloud and its possible oats, led on in their desertion by two of the handsomest, smallest, and meekest-looking mules in the train. The road rewarded them with retributive justice that day. The sloughs were innumerable, and indeed innumerable they continued to be for weeks and weeks, only approaching the limits of mathematical calculation as we neared Pembina. This may seem strange when it is considered that we crossed the divide between the tributaries of the Minnesota and Mississippi; but, as Joseph said, “with a general



GETTING OUT OF A SLOUGH.

convexity of outline there was great concavity of detail." The convex "divide," like a rounded cheek, had a small-pox of lakes, bogs, ponds, sloughs, and morasses.

To give in detail the particulars of this part of our experience would be cruel to writer and reader, though it might gain the former a seat in the Chinese Paradise of Fuh, where the purgatorial price of admission is to wade for seven years in mud up to the chin. So let me give the spirit of it all, in a lump.

The only external indication of some kinds of sloughs is a ranker growth of grass, perhaps of a different color, in the low ground between two hills of a rolling prairie. Again, on a level prairie, where the road seems the same as that you have been traveling dry shod, your horse's hoofs splash in wet grass. This goes on, worse and worse, till you get nervous and begin to draw up your heels out of the water; and so, perhaps, for a mile, whether in the water or out of it you can not tell, horses up to their bellies trudging through the water and grass, carts sinking deeper than the hubs, you travel at the rate of one mile in 2.40. Very often, however, sloughs put on no such plausible appearance, but confess themselves at once unmistakably bad and ruinous to horses and carts.

It is the wagon-master's business to ride ahead of the train a few hundred yards, and, on coming to a slough, to force his horse carefully back and forth through it till he finds the best place for crossing. I have fished for trout in Berkshire streams so small that, to an observer a hundred yards distant, I must have seemed to be bobbing for grasshoppers in a green meadow; but the appearance is not more novel than to see a strong horse plunging and pitching in a sea of green

grass that seems to have as solid a foundation as that your own horse's hoofs are printing. Some sloughs have no better or worse spot. It is mud from one side to the other—mud bottomless and infinite, and backing up in some infernal Symmes's hole. The foremost cart approaches, and, at the first step, the mule sinks to his knees. Some mules lie down at this point; but most of ours were sufficiently well broken to make one more spasmodic leap, and, though the water or mud went no higher than their fetlocks, then and there they laid them down. This is the moment for human intervention, and, on the part of profane mule-drivers, for an imprecation of divine intervention. The men get off their horses and carts, and hurry to the shafts and wheels, tugging and straining, while one or two yell at and belabor the discouraged and mulish mule.

The census man would have no difficulty at this juncture in ascertaining the persuasion to which profane mule-drivers belong, or, at least, in which they have been reared. Some of their oaths derive their flavor from camp-meeting reminiscences. Another man excels as a close-communication swearer, and, after damning his mule, superfluously damns the man who would not damn him. Other oaths have a tropical luxuriance of irreverent verbiage that shows them to have been drawn from the grand and reverent phrases of the Prayer-book, and still others are of that sort which proves their users godless wretches, with whom, for very ignorance, oaths stand in the stead of adjectives.

Belabored by oaths, kicks, whip-lashes, and ropes-ends, the mule may rise and plunge and lie down, and rise again and plunge, until the cart is on solid ground; but it was generally the quicker way to unload the cart or wagon at once,

or to lighten it until the mule could get through easily. If this was inconvenient for any reason, a rope was fastened to the axle, and twenty men pulling one way would generally succeed in beating the planet pulling the other. Our Indian ponies got through mud splendidly. Joseph was heard to recommend a stud of them for the hither side of Banyan's Slough of Despond.

They were too lazy to be other than deliberate in getting out of a hole. They put their feet down carefully, and, like oxen, waddled along, one step or one jump at a time. So they never strained themselves as a high-spirited horse would, and yet were not so mulish as to be willing to stay stuck in the mud for centuries, until the branches of future trees should lift them up for fruit like Sir John Mandeville's sheep.

Three times we crossed the tortuous Sauk, first by a ferry like the one at Rum River. The next time, four days afterward, we had to make our own ferry. One stout fellow swam across with a rope in his teeth, which was tied firmly to stout trees opposite each other. Then the wagon box was taken off the wheels, two or three hours spent in calking it, launched, and a man in the bow, holding on to the rope which sagged down to within a yard of the water, by bending his body and keeping stiff legs, could head the bow up stream against the swift current, and pull himself and the load across. A Cree half-breed did this canoeing as dexterously from the first as if he had spent his life on the river. Horses, mules, and oxen were then pushed into the stream, one by one, their lariats tied around their noses, and held by another person in the boat, so as to guide them at once to the only place where they could get ashore. Finally, the empty carts and wagons were floated across, and pulled up the bank by a rope around the axle.

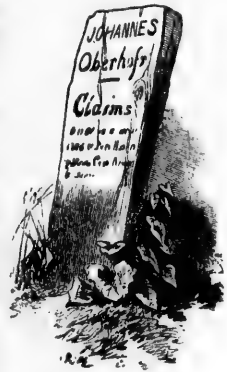
Crossing other streams where the current was not swift enough to overturn the carts, and the water only deep enough to flow over the boxes, we cut saplings, made a floor on top of the frames, lifted the goods top of that, and crossed without unharnessing a mule.

The conclusion of all which is, that people on railroad cars don't realize what they have to be thankful for.

This valley of the Sauk up which we were traveling is one of the garden spots of Minnesota. The new settlers of the last two or three years have many of them taken that direction. Claim-stakes and claim-shanties speck the road from one end of the river to the other. Some of the claim-shanties were built in good faith, had been lived in, and land was tilled around them. Not a few, however, were of the other sort, built to keep the letter of the law; four walls merely, no windows, door, or roof. We often found it convenient to camp near these edifices, and saved ourselves the trouble of going half a mile for wood when we found it cut so near at hand.

A terrific thunder-storm came on one afternoon in this Sauk valley to which the average thunder-storms of lat. $40^{\circ} 42'$ long. $74^{\circ} 41'$ are two-penny and theatrical. We were drenched, of course, with the lowest cloudful, in a moment; but the thunder was so near, prolonged, and hurtling, that it was enough to make a brave man shiver to remember that his trowsers had a steel buckle. All day and all night the tempest continued, rain pouring, lightning flashing round the whole circuit of the heavens, and the thunder unintermitted. But the next morning rose as clear-skied as if the preceding had been a June day of old tradition, and not written down in the calendar of the battle-month as the anniversary of Montebello.

Our last day's travel in Sylvan Sauk Valley took us to Osakis Lake. Here we camped for Sunday, in an opening in a fine forest which surrounded the lake. Sunday was a perfect day. With patient sight one might trace here and there the graceful scarf-like shadowy white of the highest and rarest clouds against the pure blue. No lower or coarser forms were visible any where from horizon to horizon, and even these would sweep into such evanescent folds, and ripple away into such ethereal faintness, that the eye passed them and looked through the blue ether itself. To breathe the pure air was indeed an inspiration. The wind came fresh and clear over the lake.



CLAIM-STAKE.



CLAIM-SHANTY.

There it lies, surrounded by forests on every side, with only here and there vistas of open prairie. From the level of the roots of the nearest trees, and from the shadows that rest among their huge trunks, the shining beach slopes down, its white sand the floor where the waves endlessly run up, visible far out and then fused with the surface blue. I gave myself a baptism in this beautiful cold lake, and then finding an old gnarled oak whose spreading limbs made a comfortable couch overlooking the water, whiled the still hours away till the shadows of the distant trees lengthened over the lake and touched the hither shore.

Oskis Lake is twelve miles long and two or three wide; its waters are quite cold, and abound with the largest and finest kind of fresh-water fish—wall-eyed pike, bass, perch, and other. The Doctor, our one skillful fisherman, brought in a boat-load, caught in an hour or two's drifting. The rest of the camp spent the day in reading, writing, sewing, fishing, washing, cooking, and mending wagons.

Ten or twelve miles over the very worst road yet, brought us to a place which, when it gets to be a place, is to be called Alexandria. Half

of the distance and more was through woods. Look up, and there was gorgeous sunlight flooding the fresh young leaves, lighting up old oak trunks, and glorifying the brilliant birch and maple, pigeons flying or alit, robins and thrushes, and what other mellow-throated songsters I know not, making the vistas and aisles of shadow alive with sound; but look down, and your horse was balking at a labyrinth of stumps, where there was no place to put his foot: this extending for ten rods, and there terminating in a slough aggravated by the floating debris of a corduroy bridge, and this ending in a mud-hole, the blackness of darkness, with one stump upright to prevent your wading comfortably through it, to transfix your horse or upset the cart.

The carts and their drivers could not get through by daylight, but were compelled to stay in the woods and fight mosquitoes all night, reaching Alexandria about noon the next day. Joseph and I, on our ponies, "thrilled the sombre boskage of the wood," and got to Alexandria before dark. It was slow traveling, but, on sure-footed Indian ponies, not very disagreeable. The mosquitoes were our worst torment; we avoided their terebrations by "taking the veil."



TAKING THE VEIL.

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MAJOR PATTEN'S CROSSING.

About the middle of the afternoon we caught glimpses through the leaves of a lake at the right of us, and soon came to the short branch road which led to it. Leading our horses down to the water's edge, we observed a blazed tree just at the margin, and an inscription neatly written on the white wood, with date and name of the company by whom it had been cut.

Coming out on the beautiful prairie which is the site of Alexandria, we were surprised to see the wagons and tents of Messrs. Burbank and Blakely's first two stage loads, showing that their road-makers were not far enough ahead for them to follow on. Is it possible that I have forgotten to tell the romance of that stage load? Two Scotch girls, sisters, journeying without any protector save their good looks and good sense, from Scotland to Lake Athabasca, where one of them was to redeem her plighted faith and marry a Hudson Bay Company's officer. Ocean voyage alone, two or three thousand miles' travel through a strange country to St. Paul alone, then this journey by stage to Fort Abercrombie, camping out and cooking their own food, and voyaging down Red River in a batteau, near a thousand miles more, and fired at by Red Lake Indians on the way, then journeying with a Company's

brigade to Athabasca, going north all the while and winter coming on too, and the mercury traveling down to the bulb; but her courage sinking never a bit. Hold her fast when you get her, Athabaskan! She is a heroine, and should be the mother of heroes.

And the brave bridesmaid sister! Where are "the chivalry?" Letters take about a year to get to Athabasca, gentlemen.

Three English sportsmen and their guns, tents, and dogs filled another stage. They had hunted in Canada and Florida, shot crocodiles in the valley of the Nile, fished for salmon in Norway, and were now on their way to the buffalo-plains of the Saskatchewan to enjoy the finest sport of all. Purdy rifles, Lancaster rifles, Wesley Richards's shot-guns, and Manton's shot-guns, single-barreled and double-barreled: these were their odds against brute strength and cunning. One of them was a baronet, the others Oxford men, and all might have passed a life of ease in London with society, libraries, establishments; but this wild life, with all its discomforts and privations and actual hardships and hard work, had more attractions for them in its freedom, its romance, its adventure. Their stories were of beleaguered proctors and bear fights, Hyde

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Park and deer-stalking, Rotten Row rides and moose hunts. Next year we may hear of them up the Orinoco or in South Africa. Better there than wasting away manliness in "society," or the "hells," or in bribing electors; but is there not something else in all England worth living and working for?

One of the three was a splendid rifle-shot. With my Maynard rifle, breach-loading and weighing only six pounds, unlike any thing he had ever handled, he plumped a sardine-box at distances of 100, 150, 200, and 300 yards, and hit the small tree, in a cleft of which it was fastened, almost every time in twenty.

Our tented field was a fair beginning for a town. In fact, we far outnumbered the actual population of Alexandria. Joseph and I were glad enough to be permitted to enjoy more than municipal privileges under the roof of Judge G—. If pioneers were all of the kind that have founded Alexandria, civilization and refinement would travel west as fast as settlements, instead of being about a decade behind. The house was built of hewn logs, of course; but inside grace and beauty struggled with the roughness of such raw materials and came off victorious, and yet nothing was out of place. There was an air about the main room that made you remember that the grandest queen walked on rush-strewn floors not half so fine as these spotless planks—and what wall-paper had such delicate hues as the peeled bark revealed on the timber beneath?—and there was a woman's trick in the fall of the window-curtains and the hanging of the net over the spotless counterpane in the corner, and the disposition of things on the bureau, crowned by its vaseful of beautiful prairie flowers. Here we enjoyed such dinner-table chat and such long evening talks, W. and

I, with Judge G— and his wife, as made us wish we had known them in London Terrace ten years ago, though we could regret the absence of none of the luxuries which they were daily proving a well-ordered life could be lived without.

Alexandria is environed by beautiful lakes—lakes which I obstinately refuse to rhapsodize over, simply because they are so many and all deserve it. To a promontory jutting out into one of these I took a seven-mile walk early one drizzly morning, with one of our party, accompanied by a hound, for which he had returned, to follow up the scent of a deer which he said he had shot and wounded badly two hours before. We found the place—the leaves were splashed with blood—gave the dog the scent, and followed his wild running for two or three miles, but saw no deer, and walked home in the rain. Now there are three hypotheses, together exhaustive, which may explain this unfortunate occurrence. Either the deer was not badly wounded, and went further on, "making no sign," or the dog was not a good dog, or, if a good dog, had had his nose spoiled in killing skunks, which is possible. I never will believe that a chipmonk has as much blood in his veins as was scattered over those leaves, or that any sane man could mistake a squirrel for a deer.

First day's travel from Alexandria train made 2½ miles. Best four-wheel wagon had all its spokes crushed out falling into some rut in a wood-road. Next day we got on a dozen miles farther to Chippewa crossing. A party of fifty Chippewas were hunting and fishing in the vicinity. Two dusky boys watched us crossing from their canoe and laughed, I fancy, at white paddling. A shower came up, but before the shallow lake had put on its goose-flesh to meet the rain-drops, their paddles were out, and they



"NOW I LAY ME—"

skimming the water, straight as a crow flies, through the rushes to the shelter of trees which

overhung the water, and there the canoe rested motionless again, and they watched us in silence. They had speared half a dozen buffalo-fish (of a rather coarse meat), and a plug of tobacco bought all we wanted for supper.

I beg to be excused from mentioning the fact that, at this crossing, my pony in four-foot water, and with only two rods to dry land, disgracefully

reached a

and squatted, yes! *squatted* down in the water, positively refusing to obey whip or spur till I had got off his back and walked to dry land, leading him. It is also needless to mention that my saddle, saddle-bags, Shakspeare, and sketch-book, together with all of me that is fishy in mermen, became, to use a mild term, damp.

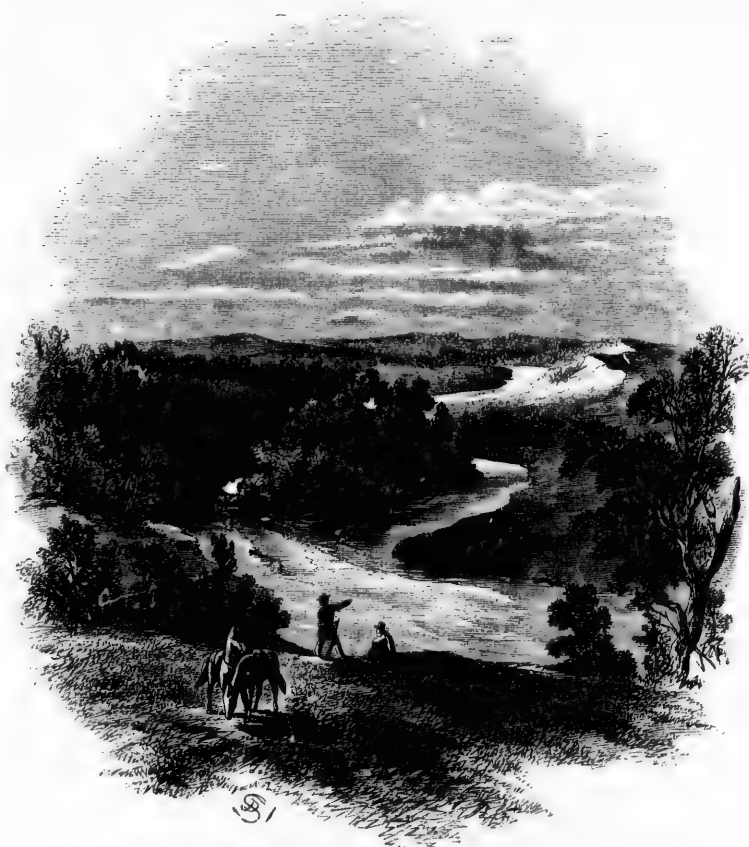
The prairie from Alexandria to Otter Tail River was a very beautiful one, the hills moderately high but of gentle slopes, their green grassy sides flecked with wild flowers of a thousand brilliant or quiet hues, and then every mile or two a high swell of land from which we could look over these smaller undulations to the great green wave rising to its height again. As we passed over these successive heights, about noon we caught sight in the distance of a beautiful lake, which, on approaching nearer, appeared to have a line of "white caps" running through it. Little wind was blowing, but the illusion was perfect. As we approached nearer, however, and saw that the white wave remained in the same place, it occurred to us that we were looking at an island of pelican; and this became evident when we saw small portions of it disintegrating about the edges, and drifting away in white clouds, relieved again—'the blue sky or the deeper blue of the lake, or as they floated past the tree-covered islands and promontories which pushed their gray sandy beaches out into the water from either shore.

I have never seen a lake which, for variety and grace of outline, appeared to me so beautiful as this, though, to be sure, its beauty was far from being of a striking sort. As Joseph and I mounted to ride on after the train we observed a large flock of the same birds circling high in air overhead. The sight was worth going far to see. There were hundreds of them sweeping around in slow and stately flight—the distance transforming all their ungainliness into grace, and the bright sunlight clothing them in white splendor.

To the right and left of us, from Osakis Lake, the head of the Sank Valley, to Otter Tail or Upper Red River, lakes of every variety of outline were visible as we journeyed on. Some were near at hand—our trail at times leading over their sandy or pebbled beaches, or upon others we looked down from the summit of a hill of rolling prairie, and again from the loftier ridges of the undulating land sea, the eye, sweeping the horizon, could trace the outlines of a dozen within the limits of its vision, near or remote—bluer than the stainless heavens, or blending in the hazy distance with the long waving



PELICAN LAKE.



FIRST VIEW OF THE RED RIVER OF THE NORTH

grass which sloped to the water's edge, or the black and brown rushes which, like timorous swimmers, did not venture far from shore, or with the deeper green of wooded capes and islands, which caught the fierce sunlight and shaded its fall upon the gentle waters, casting themselves away upon the beaches. Joseph rhapsodized and I applauded.

"These little lakes are my private passion—deep-set, dark-shadowed lakes, cozy nooks of sunshine that one may own within the compass of a farm—pocket-editions of poetry in velvet and gold—little lakes that, from under their wooded fringes, gleam with an under-soul, and flash back the introverted glances of the stars from depths as pure as the heights of the down-gazing heavens, such a lake as you can take into your confidence, and talk to in quiet hours as a lover talks to the image in a golden locket, and sees the cold crystal all aglow and shadowy with passion like a woman's eye."

It was our habit to ride ahead of the train a

mile or two, or behind it, if we staid to hunt or sketch or for sight-seeing. So riding the next morning, our eyes were the first to get sight of the waters which run to the frozen seas of the north. For four or five miles, at every elevation, we had seen ahead of us a line of timber, and beyond level prairie, which we knew must be the trees skirting the Otter Tail or Upper Red River, where, a young and wayward stream, it flows to the south and west, hither and thither, before gaining breadth and volume and gathering tributary waters, it turns to its final direction, and thenceforward flows with steady currents toward the northern star. The prairie within this bend, and toward which we were traveling, moreover, we knew to be level instead of rolling like that to the east; so on we spurred, and, surmounting a summit, on the hither side of which it seemed that the nearest curve of the river must still be miles away, there the river ran at our very feet, bursting suddenly upon us in its full loveliness like a goddess dirobing.

The day was the fourth of the month July, and this was our unexpected celebration of the Nation's gala-day. Taking the saddles from our horses, and leaving them to their independence, we sat down upon the brow of a high hill overlooking the river for miles of its wayward windings. Pen and pencil are both inadequate; but the pencil is better than the pen. And as I sketched, Joseph made the oration.

We remained here for the rest of the day. The place is called Dayton, after a gentleman who, like millions of his fellow-freemen, was not elected Vice-President. The present population numbers one. They live alone by himself in a breezy log-house, with a little off-shoot containing bunks and a cooking-stove, and whose walls are hung with dried sturgeons and catfishes, caught in the river.

Breckinridge is about twenty miles below Dayton, in a southwest direction, and is situated precisely at the point where the river begins its general northwardly course, at the junction of the Bois de Sioux. Fort Abercrombie is about the same distance northwest of Breckinridge; so that our trail toward the fort from Dayton was the hypotenuse of the river's angle.

When the gulfs of wood that marked the course of Red River had faded into dimness, and sunk below the horizon behind us, nothing was visible but the sky and this level grass stretching away in every direction. There were lines of lighter and deeper shade in the green and yellow herbage, flecks of brilliant flowers, cool blue skies, and a clearly defined horizon at the east; and under the setting sun a yellower hue in the sky, and hazier lines upon the distant and wavering bands of shade and light where earth and sky met. At night we camped beside a marsh; and when the last red streak had faded out of the sky, the full sublimity of the scene burst upon the mind. A night upon the prairie is worth a day at Niagara. As far as the eye can reach on every side sweep the level lines, slowly darkening as they approach the horizon. Nothing obstructs or limits the view of the sky. A whole

hemisphere of stars looks down upon you, and all the earth occupying the least possible angle of vision.

Just as we were camping for the night a company of Red River carts appeared upon the horizon. At first we could hardly imagine what they were—for a moment widening out into battalions, and then shrinking to the width of a single company, as the trail came directly toward or was at right angles to us, so that it seemed as if we were gazing at the evolutions of a grand army. As they came nearer the illusion was dispelled, and the train began to look like what it was—a huge land caravan. Presently we saw galloping ahead of the train a young man, well mounted, who in a few moments drew rein under the Stars and Stripes, which we had patriotically hoisted when we first saw their white flag of march fluttering in the distance. The rider, a young M'Kay, who was captain of the train, was well mounted, and sat his horse finely. His clear, bronzed face was set off by a jaunty cap. He wore a checked flannel shirt, and each shoulder bore its fancy wampum bead belt, that suspended the powder-horn and shot-pouch. He had upon his feet moccasins worked with beads and quills, and carried in his hand a short-handled riding-whip, with a long thick lash of buffalo hide. Meanwhile, as we exchanged the news and friendly questionings, the train had approached, one cart after another wheeling by in long procession—scores upon scores, each wheel in every cart having its own individual creak or shriek, and each cart drawn by an ox harnessed in rawhide, one driver to three carts. The drivers were all half-breeds, dressed in every variety of costume, but nearly all showing some flash of gaudy color in the invariable belt or sash, or in the moccasins, and politely touching the cap with a "Bon jour!" to such of us as stood near enough to return the salutation.

The next morning, as we were eating breakfast, a new party appeared, which soon turned out to be Sir George Simpson, the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company in America, and



FORT ABERCROMBIE.



CANTONMENTS, FORT ABERCROMBIE.

his attendants. He was just returning from his annual visit to Norway House, and was only seven days from Fort Garry. He was accompanied by relays of horses, and himself rode in an old buggy at a spanking gait. The voice, which is said to make chief factors and chief traders and chief clerks tremble, and which makes and mars fortunes in Rupert's Land, was to us strangers very pleasant in its tones. Our eyes followed the white round-topped hat and white capote, as long as they were visible, with great interest, until we learned, too late, that one of the men in his party was Dr. Rae, the Arctic explorer.

A few hours' ride the next morning brought us to the Red River of the North again, where it flowed northwardly six miles above (i. e., south of) Fort Abercrombie. We crossed at a convenient fording-place, where the water was little higher than the horses' flanks, and galloped on to the fort.

North of Graham's Point, as we rounded a turn of the river, whose wooded margin had concealed it from us hitherto, we came in sight of Fort Abercrombie—that is, of the one building erected for the commander's quarters, and the canvas store-houses, which are built upon the prairie near the river bank. The log-houses, which officers and privates at present occupy, are all built in a quadrangle upon a pear-shaped promontory, surrounded by water, and a trifle lower than the level of the prairie. The view on the preceding page is taken from the neck of this pear-shaped promontory, looking west toward the prairie. The view above is taken from the same spot, back to back, looking east toward the interior of the cantonment.

Here were our old stage-coach friends, the

Englishmen, quartered in their tents, and the Scotch lasses, by the kindness of Captain Davis, quartered in one of the completed rooms of the building shown in the first sketch, where they were awaiting the construction of their batteau.

Joseph found an old friend in the sutler of the fort, and by him we were introduced to the commander and principal officers. We enjoyed their hearty hospitality for the remainder of the day and night. As we sat in the Captain's quarters at the close of the afternoon, smoking out the mosquitoes with Manilla cheroots, and listening to his entertaining accounts of life on the border, an orderly brought news of another train wishing to cross the river at this point. Presently they came along, the cattle bearing new armies of mosquitoes over the neck, and through the cantonment to the place where the *Anson Northup* was moored.

Wheeling their loaded carts on the boat, they swung it back and forth, from shore to shore, till all were ferried over, then drove their oxen into the water, swimming them across, and camped in the woods on the opposite side of the river.

The Captain gave Joseph and myself a whole house to ourselves that night, with straw beds, which were a luxury after the cold ground; and the delicious coolness of the room, with not a mosquito to sting or sing, soon sent us to sleep, the last sounds that fell upon our ears being the songs of the half-breeds over the river—songs of their own nation, and of Sioux and Chipewa braves—rising and falling in monotonous cadences till all were alike unheard.

The steamboat *Anson Northup* deserves an epic. Here is the argument, to which I hope some one will yet gird himself to write a poem.

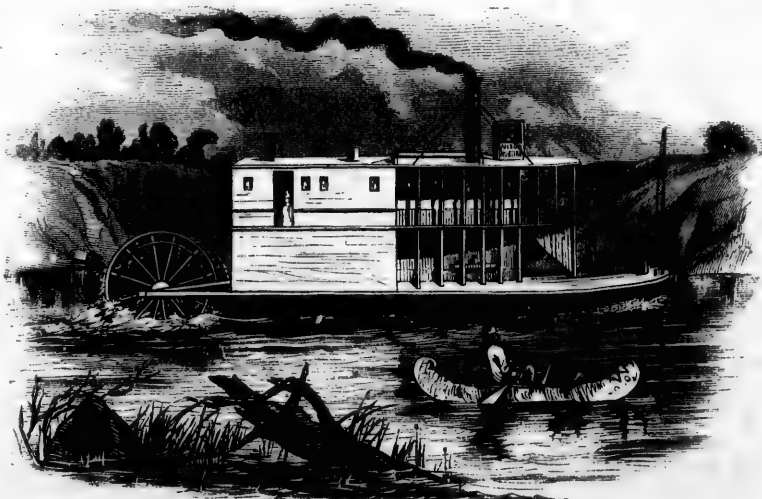
Late in the winter of 1858-'9, Mr. Anson Northup, having run his boat up the Crow Wing River, a tributary of the Mississippi, the previous fall, took it to pieces, packed the cabin, machinery, and timber for building the hull, on sleighs, which, with great difficulty, were drawn by horses and oxen across to Otter Tail Lake, and thence westward to the mouth of the Cheyenne on the Red River. Assisted by the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce, but mainly depending on his own private resources, and by hard work and perseverance, the boat was rebuilt on the banks of Red River, and launched successfully on the 19th of May, and, as the breaking bottle drenched the planks, was christened the *Anson Northup*. In the high-water of early spring she made her trial-trip down to Fort Garry and back. She had to lie by every night, of course, and must have been greatly delayed by the necessity of stopping to cut timber for the fire. In spite of these delays, she made the return trip in eight days; and what must the quiet Selkirkers have thought of the American steamboat? The Albany burgomasters were not more amazed by the sound of the *Chancellor Livingston's* paddles.

And now about the navigation of Red River. Such navigation is undoubtedly feasible. The boat's two trips to Fort Garry have demonstrated it. In the latter part of the fall, and in the winter of course, it is impracticable. After the ice breaks up, which usually happens about the 1st of May, the water is very high, and the river is navigable to as large steamboats as can make all the turns in the winding river, from Fort Abercrombie to the mouth at Lake Winnipeg—nearly five hundred miles. After the 1st of August the water has fallen sufficiently to reveal serious obstructions in the channel from the fort to the

mouth of the Cheyenne River, its largest tributary but one, entering Red River fifty or sixty miles below the fort. But from this point to its mouth it is easily navigable in the lowest stages of water, until the ice forms in early November. The success of the boat works a revolution in the Company's business. Hereafter the annual outfit and returns will pass through the United States, instead of by the difficult and circuitous passage of Hudson's Bay, to York and Moose Factories.

The train did not cross the river above the fort as we did, but continued on for about fifty miles down the east side of the river to the Cheyenne Crossing, near the mouth of the Cheyenne River. Joseph and I, who had remained behind, crossed the river on the *Anson Northup*, swimming our horses. We therefore had to ride thirty-four miles on the trail of the train, doing their two days' travel in one day, and that the hottest of the season. The air was really furnace-like, reminding one of the accounts from India of the scorching heats of mid-day in that more tropical climate.

But when we got to camp, two hours after sunset, there was still no rest for us. Mosquitoes abounded, biting our hands, and necks, and faces, as we cooked our suppers, and flying into our eyes and mouths whenever we dared to open either. At this season of the year mosquitoes are the intolerable curse of travelers, the little black fly the tolerable curse, and wood-ticks the curse. As for the rest of the entomological creation, they bear no comparison with these in their power of inflicting annoyance and petty misery upon the human race; and one soon gets the habit, I found, of brushing a spider from his face, an ant from his neck, or taking any creeping, crawling thing from the inside of his near-



THE "ANSON NORTHUP."



THE SMUDGE.

est piece of clothing, with the same indifference with which he brushes away a house-fly in Christian lands. But inasmuch as wood-ticks burrow into and under the skin, and stick fast and swell, and whereas these buffalo-gnats swarm in millions, and of a hot, sultry afternoon, when little wind is stirring, will fly into the eyes, ears, and nostrils by scores; and whereas mosquitoes buzz, and pierce, and suck, and sing by the thousand and tens of thousands, biting the hands, and face, and ears, and neck, when we ride through timber, and stinging us into wakefulness before sunrise, cheating us of the delicious "last nap," and stinging us into a passion long after sunset, barricading with their filmy wings our way to the water, and, when both hands are occupied, perforating our tenderest cuticles, and making of our level skin a rolling prairie of blotches and pimples for disturbing their ancient and solitary reign, it becomes necessary to sleep, comfort, and happiness that traveling mankind should resort to the smudge.

A few brands of rotten wood from the campfire, covered with dried grass and green grass, make a smudge about equally unendurable, whether inhaled by men or mosquitoes; though of the two evils, mosquito or smudge, men prefer to endure that which is not quite intermina-

ble, though it may be almost intolerable. Horses and mules, when the smoke begins to roll up in good volume, will stand over it, and in it, till the tears run down their long noses in streams, rather than endure the torments of mosquito-bites outside its protection. Every night we closed the tent soon after dark, and smudged it out thoroughly, before going to blanket; so that when we crawled in under the tent-flap, we felt rather than saw our way, and had to keep our mouths close to the ground to get enough fresh air to live on. During the night the smoke settles, fresh air filtrates through the canvas, and we slept as comfortably as on Howe's spring mattresses.

We crossed the Red River into Dakota Territory near the mouth of the Cheyenne River. At its mouth it is about one hundred and twenty feet wide—a deep stream, of nearly two-thirds the volume of Red River. From here to Pembina our route was through a dangerous Indian country, inhabited by hostile Sioux.

The watch was doubled, and added precautions taken against surprise or attack. It was a novel sensation to a peaceable man who had known no greater danger at night than the remote chance of being garroted on Broadway, or of being struck by lightning while sitting at his

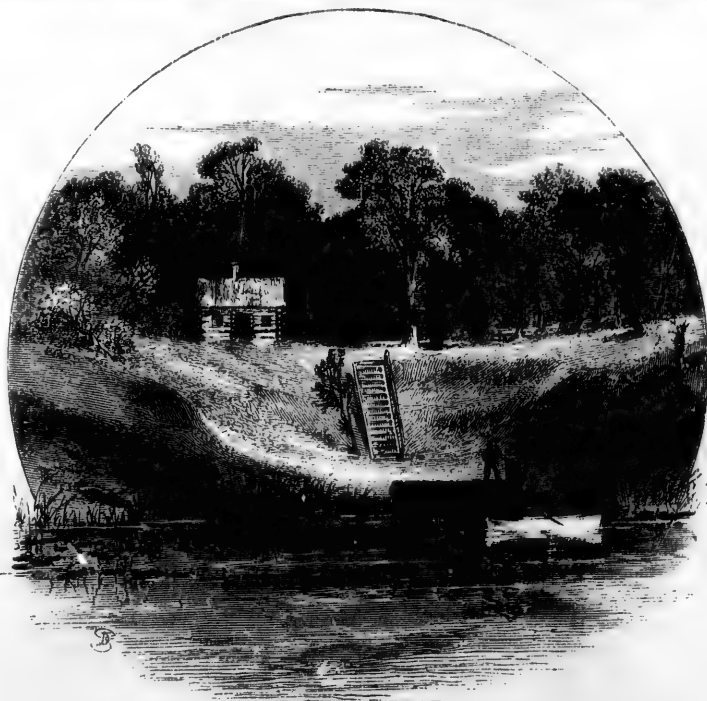
window in Ninth Street, to bethink himself, at every sunset, of the prospect of an attack from hostile Indians, or a stampede of the horses and mules gotten up by thievish ones, and to prepare for such probabilities by keeping his rifle and pistols in perfect order—loaded and capped, and at half-cock, and to take his turn at the watch.

Joseph had a theory, however, that the Sioux were off in some remote portion of their territory, making treaties, and when his watch came around generally kicked the brands of the camp-fire, which his predecessor had carefully put out, into a blaze again, and sat down, with his pipe, in the light of it—the best possible mark for prowling Indians. He lives to tell the tale and show the hat with a bullet-hole through the crown.

On Saturday, the second day after crossing at Dakotah City, as the one log-house at the crossing of Red River is called, we had a long day's travel over prairie where there was no wood or water, and with the exception of an hour's rest at noon by the side of a slough where the horses could manage to drink a little, the train was kept in motion from eight in the morning till seven at night.

About five o'clock the sharpest-sighted of us horsemen, riding ahead of the train, on ascending a ridge of the prairie which overlooked the

valley of the Elm River, saw, clear away on the edge of the horizon, where the heat of the sun made the level lines of the prairie tremulous, and seemed to fuse earth and sky, two black spots, motionless, and looking like nothing that we had been accustomed to see. They were buffaloes, of course, we all agreed; or, as Joseph frantically exclaimed, "Viands for a regiment of hungry gods, brought to us in the pockets of Jupiter's old coat!" A bull's hide, you remember, with a bull inside of it. For half an hour we all trotted along in their direction, keeping together, and still wondering whether they were in reality a couple of stray buffalo bulls, or some huge boulders outraging geological orthodoxy. The space between the spots grew wider—they were buffalo, browsing along on the prairie, and still unconscious of our approach. Two of our horsemen tightened their reins for a brisk canter, and led off at a rate of speed which would have been ruinous to Joseph's pony, or to mine, so early in the chase. We kept on at a steady jog. The wind was in our faces, and the two riders ahead got within a quarter of a mile of the game before they were discovered. Then we saw their dark frames turned broadside for an instant, and the next moment the chase had begun. We, too, joined with a wild hurrah, spurring our horses to their best gallop; ahead of us the two monsters, flouting their shaggy



DAKOTAH CITY.

manes, and thundering along at a wonderful rate, and the two riders after them at full speed, with great good sense heading them and turning their flight toward us, who were coming up as fast as our second-rate horse-flesh would permit. I was riding Dan Rice, now as ever, tough and lazy; but by plying whip and spur, and shrieking to him like any wild Indian, I got him into speed, and soon neared the boys, who were now alongside the first of the shaggy monsters, firing and wheeling away as the stately old fellows plunged on, heedless of the galling bullets. The thrilling excitement of that chase! The buffaloes galloping in their heavy, headlong way, as if they knew their lives were in the chase; C—, with one or two shots more in his revolver, and determined they should be fatal, close alongside the flanks of the one into which they had emptied their barrels; and L—, wild with excitement, begging for another pistol or a rifle. My pony could barely get alongside, but at last he did. C— drew back; and I saw for an instant the red spots on his great side bleeding; then leveled my light rifle like a pistol, with one hand, and fired, the muzzle almost against his shoulder. He staggered into a quicker flight, and in another direction, away from the larger bull, still untouched, who was thundering on ahead. He, too, turned. I saw my chance; left the first one to those who had earned the right to dispatch him, and rode in such a way as to separate the pair, marking the foremost one for a chase. I reloaded as soon as possible, all the while at full gallop, but not gaining an inch on the buffalo, though close upon his heels, not half a dozen rods away, and he every moment turning that black, shaggy head to the one side or the other to see his pursuer. A stern chase is a long one. Every pore was streaming, and I threw off my coat, tied it behind me, threw away the stirrups, clapped heels to pony, and yelled him into a faster gait.

I never knew what physical excitement was before, and thought the oddest things while in that exciting race. The tones of my own voice amazed my mind. I wondered if I should ever ask any woman to love me, in the voice with which I besought Dan to fly faster. All passion and pathos were in the tone; and yet, somehow, though the blood was boiling, and I was so light that it seemed as if the wind blew through me, my mind sat apart and wondered how it could be that its highest functions were for an instant usurped, and my heart trembled at such living semblance of its noblest moods.

A mile or two of those tremendous strides began to tell upon the heavy creature, and his gait grew sensibly slacker. Dan gradually gained upon him, and as I got alongside I pulled trigger. For the only time in all my use of the rifle the cap snapped, but the cartridge failed to catch the fire. Buffalo-bull turned with a terrible snort, head and horns down, and made for pony and me. He was not the bull to be insulted by snapping caps. Pony wouldn't fight, shame upon him! but gathered up his heels

quicker than lightning, and leaped a great leap ahead of him, and around to the other side. If he had turned, two horns would have disembowelled him. Luckily for me my feet were out of the stirrups and my seat was firm, or I might have been sent kiting into the air and down by bull's feet, instead of enjoying that spinal thrill from Dan's tightening loins. Buffalo-bull did not follow us far, but turned and made off at a small angle, using his best legs—four of them. I brought pony to a stand, toes down, drew a bead for the vital spot just behind the fore-shoulder, and fired. Buffalo-bull, that had galloped on four legs, hobbled on three. I had fired a little too far forward, and broken the shoulder-blade. I had no more cartridges, but walked my horse along as fast as the bull could hobble, till another came and dispatched him later in the day.

One of our party, the son of a rich Boston merchant—a clever scape-grace, who had traveled the world over, and, among other things, had bought up and killed beef for California miners in '49—superintended the cutting-up of the buffalo. Axes and butcher-knives soon dissected the huge carcass, and two carts were loaded with the meat from the two bulls, and wheeled into camp late that evening. Rousing fires had been built, and "Bony," the scientific cook of the Agony Hall mess, gave us all steaks and fries and "bouillions" that night, and as long as the fresh meat lasted. The next day (Sunday) was spent in jerking the meat—i. e., cutting it in thin slices, and drying it in the sun or over a slow fire, the smoke keeping off flies and gnats.

My only coat—a corduroy, with the pockets full of papers—had tumbled off in the buffalo chase. Monday morning, an hour before sunrise, Joseph and I went to search for it. We took along a half-breed bred to prairie life, with keen eyes, and the promise of reward as an eye-opener. We had for a base of operations an imaginary line drawn from the head of the first buffalo killed, directly west half a mile. I knew that my coat was within a hundred yards of that line. We searched for miles and miles around; it was less than five miles from the camp to where the carcass lay, but not a hair of it could we see. The wolves could not have eaten it, and it certainly stood up two feet from the ground, a black, hairy mass, the most conspicuous kind of a w-y-mark. But we might as well have looked for the track of Columbus's ship, left, in the fall of 1492, east of San Salvador, in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. The sea is not more pathless than a level prairie.

The next Monday afternoon we reached Pembina. During that week one day's travel was very much like another. Joseph compared our daily topography to successive pancakes which we seemed to be turning off the immense grid-dle of the horizon, smoking hot from the fiery oven of the sun. On the right of us, with our glasses we could see the distant line of timber marking the northward course of Red River; about every day we crossed some one of its west-

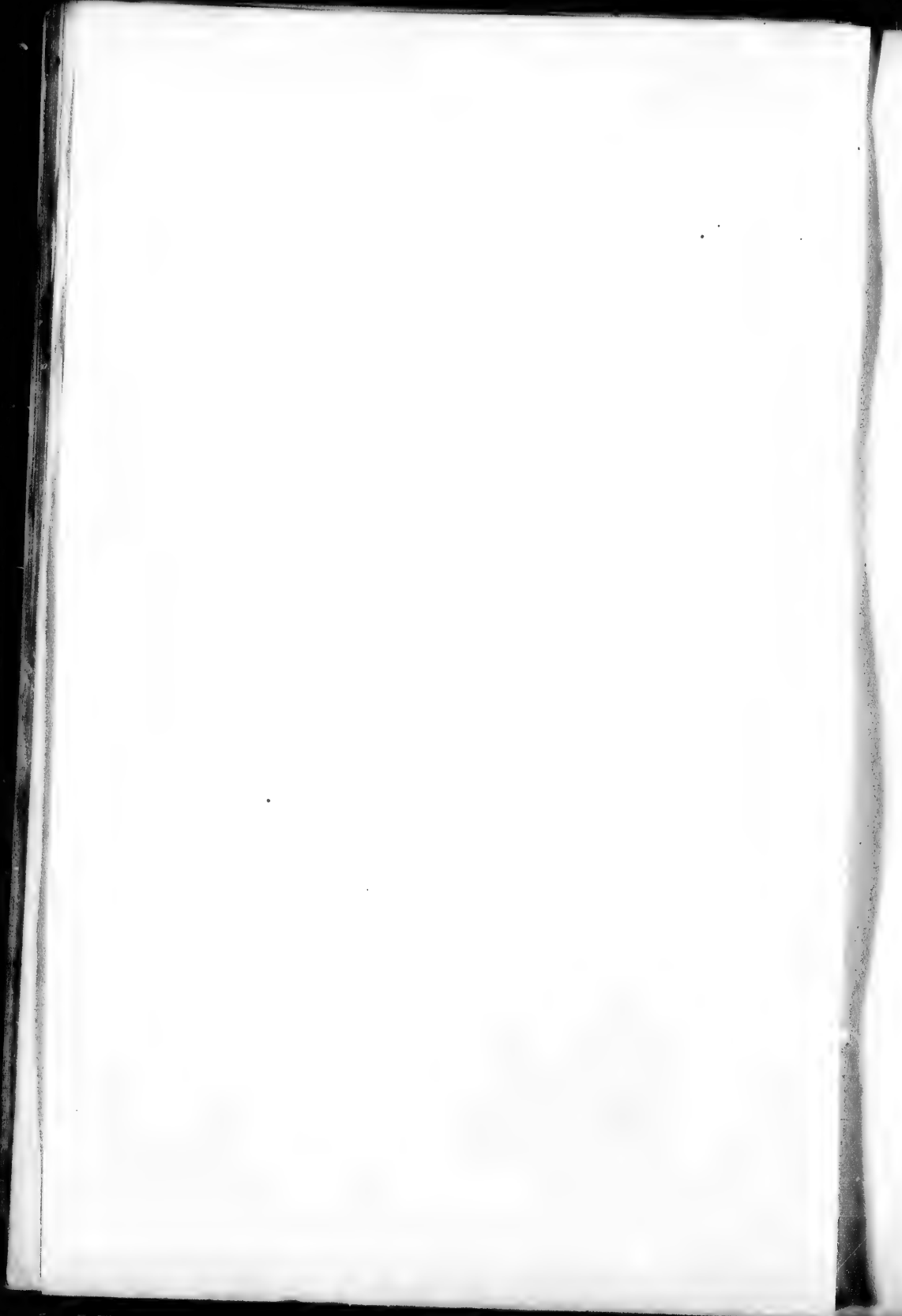
ern tributaries—first a line of blue on the northern horizon, resolving itself into trees which we gradually neared, plunged into, fording the stream which ran through them, and emerging on the other side to another stretch of open prairie, terminated at the distance of twenty or thirty miles by another timbered stream. Sometimes we had no water but swamp water, and no wood but the *bois de vache*, or “buffalo chips,” which gave an unpleasant flavoring to our cook’s savory pancakes; and once we got stuck, late in the afternoon, in the middle of a huge marsh, where with great difficulty we found a bit of dry ground big enough to spread our blankets on, going supperless to bed, and waiting for daylight to extricate ourselves from the wilderness of sloughs and marshes that environed us. Elm River, Goose River, Turtle River, Little Salt River, Park River, and their numberless tributaries, were those which we crossed. On the banks of Park River we found a little orchard of blueberries, and in less than ten minutes from the first alarm every body was on his hands and knees among the bushes, renewing the joys of youth. Strawberries, too, grew thicker as we advanced. They were near bringing one of our party to grief—one whom we all liked. He had a habit of walking ahead of the train for a mile or two, picking strawberries and wool-gathering, and besides, was very near-sighted. The train stopped to send after fresh meat—a young and fat bull, killed by L—after a four-mile chase—and the philosopher trudged on. When we were in motion again somebody asked, “Where’s T—?” He was nowhere to be seen. Something must be done. One officious personage, who at that time commanded the commander of the train, said, “Of course he is ahead,” and objected to delaying the train till search was made.

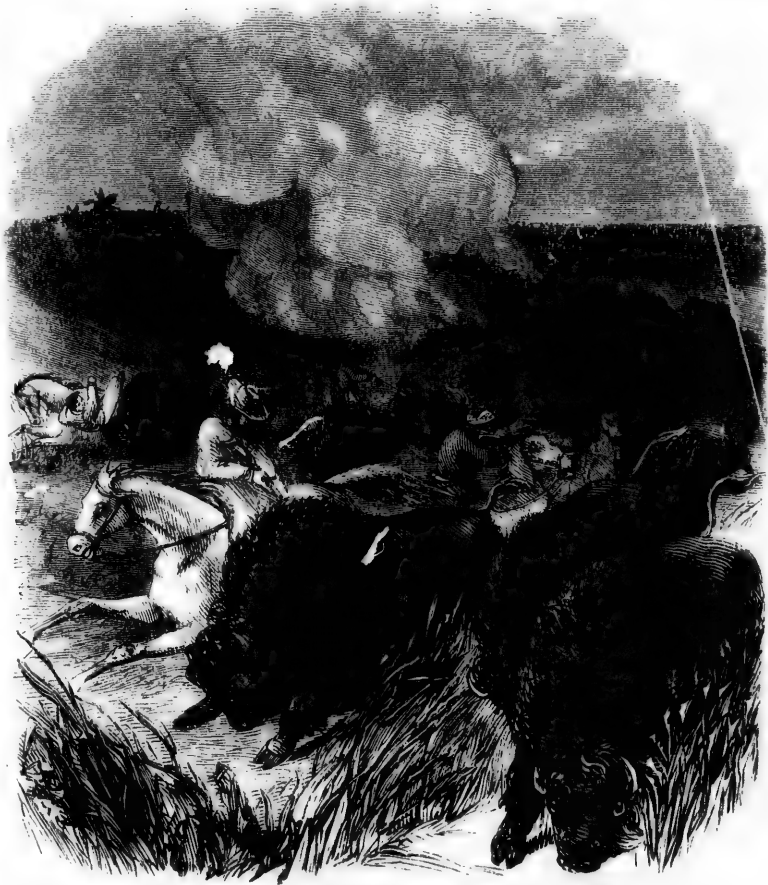
Joseph had no idea of leaving his friend alone on the prairie, and rebuked this volunteered inhumanity with the information that he (brute) might go on as soon as he chose, and as far as he chose; but as for him (Joseph), the train might travel till sundown before he would stir another step till the missing man was found. So he took the sharp-eyed Cree half breed along with him, mounted on my horse, and started off in the direction where, during the afternoon, a spot had been seen, which the man with the spy-glass had pronounced an Indian, and the man with a field-glass had pronounced an elk, and we without glasses had pronounced buffalo; and which it was thought might be T—. The train kept on slowly till it came to the first wood and water, and there camped. About sundown Joseph and the Cree half-breed came into camp with the philosopher between them. The rest of the story Joseph shall tell in his own words:

“The last authentic recollection of the philosopher was during the buffalo-hunting news, when he was seen, like

“Great Orion, sloping slowly to the West,” hunting for strawberries in labyrinths of reflection. The savant, it was known, had lost his

spectacles; and now it began to be feared that he had lost himself in the bewildering mazes of his strawberry search. We had not galloped a mile before the half-breed’s quick eye caught the figure—which had been buffalo, elk, Indian, and what not, an hour before—standing, apparently motionless, on the summit of a distant ridge, some five miles off, visible to me through a glass only as a vague black line against the sky. A very anxious interval of doubt was passed at the swiftest pace of our horses before we were at all sure that the dim object was my best friend. Speculation gradually dawned into recognition; and as we approached him, the geographer of the Northwest descended from his eminence, and saluted us with a bland and quiet courtesy, as if he felt quite at home, and was going to ask us to take something. The geographer was utterly lost on his own ground, and had not the least idea where he was. Picking strawberries he wandered outside of the trail, forgot on which side of it he was, and took, of course, the exactly wrong direction in trying to find his way back; and so, after wandering for a while among blueberries and eagles’ nests and buffalo tracks, he concluded that he was lost, and deliberately made up his mind to camp there, in sight for miles around, till he was sent for.”





BUFFALO CHASE.

TO RED RIVER AND BEYOND.

[Second Paper.]

IT was the middle of a hot July afternoon when we came to camp on the south side of Pembina River—Pembina and the Pembinese over the way. Joseph and I put on clean shirts, crossed the river in a canoe, and went to ask for our letters and papers. The mail-carrier, coming by a different route, had arrived before us. To Magenta had been added Montebello, and the thirty thousand slain; and then followed silence and newlessness for three months.

Who that reads the papers has not heard of Minnesota and the man that figured in our New York *Punch* as a runaway with the Capitol on his shoulders? Town lot speculators striving to have the Capitol elsewhere than at St. Paul (all

but Minnesotians have forgotten the name of the town now—such its obscurity); carrying the bill making the change through a Legislature too virtuous for cakes and ale, and then getting a double checkmate from the Chairman of the Committee on Enrolled Bills, who ran off with the Removal Bill in his pocket—ran off, on snow-shoes and with a dog-train, to Pembina, it was said—ran off to Room No. 27 Fuller House, St. Paul, for a fact; and there hibernated, eating surreptitious turkeys and bass by day, and drinking smuggled whisky by night, till the time of legal adjournment, disappointing the couriers sent out to overtake him, and so by bad means achieving a good end, and determining the location of the Capitol at its proper place, St. Paul.

The runaway Chairman was Joe Rolette; and here, at Pembina, he reigns King of the Border. Short, muscular, a bullethead, the neck and chest of a young buffalo bull, small hands and feet, but with tough and knotty flexors and extensors farther up; full bearded, cap, shirt, natty neckerchief, belt, trowsers, and dandy little moccasins—so he looks to the eye. Inside of all this there is a man of character, educated in New York; but with a score of wild, adventurous years on the frontier behind him—a man of character who asserts himself always, whatever the right or wrong of the assertion. Of unfailing good spirits, brimful of humor, blue three days in the year—no more and no less—sticking to his belief in a breezy, healthy way, and believing first and always in Joe Rolette; hospitable and generous beyond reckoning, and reckoning on equal unselfishness in return; giving you his best horse if you ask for it, and taking your two mules if he needs them; living for years where he might have made a fortune, and never saving a penny; a good Catholic, believing especially in absolution; a Douglas Democrat to the spinal column, and always to be counted on for good majorities from Pembina—threatening horse-ponds and nine duckings to any "Black Republican" who dares settle in the vicinity, and opening his house, and larder, and stables to the blackest Republican of all; always working for a party better than for himself, and in his zeal for public ends debiting the aggregate responsibility with the morality of the private means; lending a passing traveler his best buffalo runners for a hard journey, and then running races with them at the end of the second day's travel; affectionate to his half-breed wife, and proud of his boys—miniature Joes, of different sizes; swearing by Louis Napoleon, and proud of the French blood; too generous to his debtors to be just to his creditors; fond of his whisky, but undergoing months of total abstinence for the

sake of his wife; his best friend, the man who is not hampered by the laws of trade; his worst enemy, himself.

There he stands, just off the superb horse, which he sits as close as a Centaur, lighting a pipe, a score of wolfish train-dogs yelping about him; and as he walks across the inclosure rolling out a sturdy welcome to *ma fille*, who sits by the open window waiting for him, with love and patience in her eyes; and lifting up the youngster who has run out for a kiss—biting off the kiss with a Cree sentence to the half-breed retainer standing at the horse's head waiting for orders, or a Chippewa salute to some Red Lake Indian waiting to beg for powder and tobacco for the winter's hunt; and rounding all with an English damn to the yellow dog whose enthusiasm has entangled him and his yoke between his master's legs.

Joe gave us our letters, brought some tobacco and fresh pipes, inquired the news, showed us a room, and told us to be at home in it till we left Pembina; spoke an aside to *ma fille*, in Nistoneaux, to lay a table full of plates for all his guests; fed us with buffalo tongues and New England dough-nuts, and strawberries; and then, with fresh pipes, we tired the night out discussing politics, the spring hunt, dogs, Joe's exploit with the Capitol bill, the best road to the Rocky Mountains, Governor Gorman and his "I too am a soldier," Dakota and the Sioux Treaty, Minnesota and the Overland Route, dog-trains and train-dogs, and, first and last, Louis Napoleon and the great battles.

It was three days before the expedition's boil came to a head and expelled its rotten core—a tent full of scape-graces, who, from this point, took their own way to Fraser River. The expedition itself convalesced rapidly; and, outfitting with fresh pemmican, was ready to start upon its travels again within the week. The interval was spent in sight-seeing, while the horses and mules rested.

One day we called upon old Peter Hayden, a settler since "eighteen hundred and ever so few;" one of the first, perhaps the very first, to lead trade through the valley of Red River into our territories; who packed his goods back and forth from Prairie du Chien, then an old French trading-post, when all the trade of the valleys of the Ohio and Mississippi was carried on pack-horses from Fort Pitt to Philadelphia across the Alleghanies. The old man, an Irishman, looks weather-beaten now, and leads a quiet life on a farm whose barley may be boasted of; at least, there was a story of a camp that one of our savans, holding up a talk, saw two heads of barley where less fructuous eyes could see but one.

The next day Mr. Kennedy, the clerk in charge of Pembina Fort (two miles north of the mouth of Pembina River, on the banks of Red River), a Hudson Bay Company's station, called, and invited us to visit the fort. Four of us filled Joe's wagon, drawn by a couple of spanking bays; Mr. McFetridge, then the Collector at Pembina (Mr. Buchanan's best appointment



JOE ROLETTE.

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INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY POST.

and worst removal), with a friend on the seat, drove a swift black pacer; and four horsemen galloped along beside the two wagons; Joe mounted on a superb stallion of English blood—"Fireaway" of name and stock. A dozen

dogs followed our rattling wheels in full cry, barking and fighting.

Three cheers as we passed the international boundary post. Its inscription, whatever it may have been, had been quite effaced by the hatch-



FEMINA FORT.



PEMBINA, AND MOUTH OF PEMBINA RIVER.

ets and arrows of Indians, who used it instead of a colored boy and board for their target. The post was planted by Nicollet, we were told. Later observations have proved that it is 370 yards south of the parallel of 49° , the true boundary line.

It seemed less than that number of yards from it north to Pembina Fort.

The lodges around the fort are those of Indians, come in from their hunts to spend their proceeds or outfit anew; some, perhaps, employed by the Company. Half-breeds, however, are the ordinary "Company's servants." The long dwelling, where several families of them lived, was on our left as we passed under the high gateway of the fort. The store-houses and store were opposite. Facing the gate was the dwelling of the officers in charge—whitewashed without, scrupulously neat within.

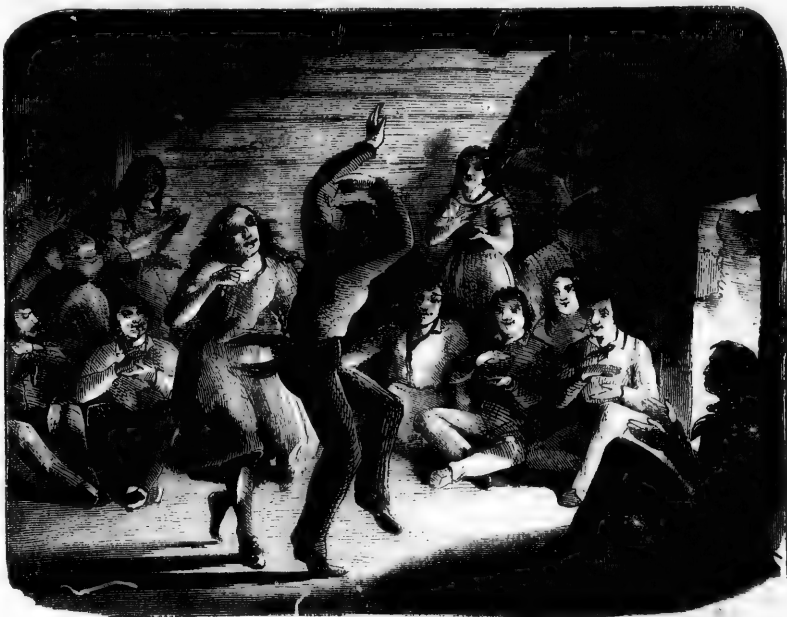
The Scotch servants and half-breed interpreters of the Company were standing by the store-house; the half-breed women and children were here and there about the area; half a dozen Chippewas stood, with arms folded, seeing every motion of our party, and hearing every sound; hundreds of furs were hanging against the fences; and through the smudge-smoke issuing from the half-breeds' quarters we could catch glimpses of dark eyes and babies' hammocks a-swinging.

The river, as may be seen in the cut, runs very near the fort, and is eighty yards wide, and twelve feet deep. In 1856 it rose thirty-five feet higher, whereby the Red River Settlement and Pembina were disastrously flooded, as twice in Lord Selkirk's time. These inundations are periodical, but occur at long intervals, and,

probably, are much less serious now than formerly, for old settlers say they can note, of late years, a very considerable enlargement of the channel, both of Red River and the Assiniboine.

St. Vincent is the name of the town-site opposite Pembina, in the northwestern corner of Minnesota exactly. It receives large annual accessions to its poll-list, just before election times, from over the river; but ordinarily its population consists of a dozen half-breeds, with dogs and mosquitoes, *ad lib.*

One of the last evenings of our stay in Pembina we were invited to a half-breed dance over the river. We crossed in a crazy dug-out, of precarious equilibrium, and heard the jiggish fiddle before we reached the house. The half-breed who had rowed us over stopped at a lodge beside the path to wake up two dark-skinned maidens and invite them to the dance. We caught a glimpse of them rising from their bed of robes, their faces lit up by pleasure at the news, as much as by the burning shred of cotton which floated on a basin of tallow on the ground in the middle of the lodge. Opening the door, and entering the log-house where the dance was briskly going on, we were greeted by a chorus of Ho! ho! ho!—the universal salutation of the aboriginal (total and semi). The fiddle did not cease its scraping, nor the heels of the dancers for a moment intermit their vibrant thumps on the plank floor. The scene was a wild one, though within four walls. A huge mud chimney, with an open fire-place at the right, a four-posted bed, with blankets only, in the further left-hand corner; one or two chairs, which were politely handed to the strangers; and all around



BALL AT PEMBINA.

the room, sitting upon the floor as Indians and tailors sit, were half-breed men and women, boys and girls—twenty or thirty in all; one mother, with bare breast, suckling her babe; another busy in keeping her little one's toddling feet out of the pan of melted grease low on the mud hearth, with a cotton rag hanging over the edge, alight, which made such dark shadows in among the groups in strange places, shadow and light alternating against the rafters and the roof as the figures of the dance changed.

Jigs, reels, and quadrilles were danced in rapid succession to the sound of that "dem'd horrid grind," fresh dancers taking the place of those on the floor every two or three moments. The men were stripped to shirt, trowsers, belt, and moccasins; and the women wore gowns which had no hoops. A vigorous shuffle from some thick-tipped young dancer, with his legs in flour-sacks, or a lively movement of some wrinkled hag, trying to renew the pleasures and activity of her youth, would call out a loud chorus of admiring "Ho! ho! ho!" and, fired by contagious enthusiasm, a black-eyed beauty in blue calico, and a strapping *bois brulé*, would jump up from the floor and outdo their predecessors in vigor and velocity—the lights and shadows chasing each other faster and faster over the rafters; the flame, too, swaying wildly hither and thither; and above the thumps of the dancers' heels, and the frequent ho! and the loud laughter of the ring of squatter sovereigns, rose the monomaniac fiddle-shrieks, forced out

of the trembling strings as if a devil was at the bow.

Perhaps it is clear that here we saw the commonalty. The next night Joe Rote'te gave a dance in his house, and here we saw the aristocracy of Pembina. There was the same enthusiasm, but less license; a better fiddle and the fiddler better; and more decorous dancing. Joe's little boy of eleven, home from his school at the Settlement, and his father-in-law, of near seventy, were the best of the dancers. The latter was as tireless as if his aged limbs had lost no strength by exposure to all weathers and labor, as a hunter and voyageur, for a long lifetime; and little Joe had extra double-shuffles, and intricate steps, and miraculously lively movements, which made his mother and little cousins very proud of him.

In the intervals of the dance Madame Ganga, one of Joe's lady cousins, sang some wild French ballads and a Catholic hymn. Those of our boys who were singers responded with a few choruses—negro melodies, of course.

Monday week after our arrival in Pembina we left for St. Joseph—a place seven miles south of latitude 49°, about thirty miles west of Pembina, and likewise on Pembina River, which stream, west of St. Joseph (or St. Jo, as it is universally called) runs (according to Captain Paliiser) almost entirely in British territory. Along the stream from its mouth to the lakes we afterward saw, in which it takes its rise, a belt of prairie on either side, varying in



STRAWBERRIES.

width, and covered with trees—oak, elm, poplar, and birch the principal varieties. Our road was over the open prairie, two or three miles north of the belt of timber, touching it here and there at the larger bends.

The wonder of this day's travel was the acres and acres of strawberries through which the trail passed. Beds of them, so thick that kneeling any where you could fill a hat full without more than turning around; large, ripe, luscious strawberries, tarter than those in our gardens, whose size has been increased at the expense of a richness of flavor. The wheels crushed clumps of them, and were reddened like the wheels of Juggernaut. Again and again we were tempted out of our saddles by some bed of thicker and finer berries than that we had just left the print of our knees on—gluttonous strawberry-bibbers every one of us! When we could eat no more from the vines, we filled our hats full, which were devoured in the saddle as soon as a few moments' square trotting had made a place for new draughts of their red, ripe, pulpy deliciousness.

Some ate in silence, and some in thankfulness, and some in wonder; and Joseph murmured between every faithful the praise—of Andrew Fuller, was it?—"Doubtless God might have made a better berry than the strawberry, but doubtless God never did."

Half a dozen of us stopped, about noon, at the farm of Charles Bottineau, which is on a bend of the river, nineteen or twenty miles from Pembina. Curé need not have been ashamed of the *table d'hôte*.

In the last half of the afternoon we drove on to St. Joseph, galloping down one of its grassy streets as the sun was sinking behind Pembina Mountain, which fills the western horizon.

The city was deserted; its one hundred houses were nearly all shut and barred, their accustomed inmates gone to the summer buffalo-hunt. A score or so of half-breeds, very young, or very old, or lame, most of them, gathered around our camp-fire; but of the hundreds whom we saw

on our return journey there were now no signs. Many that were unable to accompany the brigade to the plains had moved away from their homes in St. Joseph, and lived in lodges near Forts Garry and Pembina, for fear of the hostile Sioux.

The houses were nearly all of hewn logs, mudded in the chinks, generally one but sometimes two stories in height, with a single chimney. Mr. N. W. Kittson has his large trading-house inclosed within a high stockade; the nunnery and church are larger buildings than the average; and one or two are frame-houses, whose boards came from the saw-mill, which adjoins the church, and was built by its thrifty priest; but, with these exceptions, the houses are very much alike.

St. Jo is a place of considerable present and greater prospective importance. It is on our frontier, the best of all sites for a much-needed frontier fort, in the midst of a rich agricultural country, adjoining the great settlement of Northwestern British America, and is near the water-course which leads into our own territory, and insures to our benefit somewhat of the riches of the great Northwestern areas, both now and when the advancing tide of settlements shall have swept over the great valleys and left them populous.

Since 1850 the Sioux have stolen from the people of St. Jo more than four hundred horses, many of them buffalo-runners, commanding from one to three hundred dollars each, and often the only property and sole means of support which their owners had. In the same time a still larger number of horned cattle have been stolen. Worse than all, every year has seen some deaths at the hands of the Sioux. In the absence of the hunters the Indian lurks about the place, shooting and scalping, sometimes in open daylight, those who stray away from the principal streets, and at night firing into windows heedlessly left unshuttered, or falling upon some helpless man or woman who has ventured to cross the field to a neighbor's house.

At times the half-breeds have taken their wrongs into their own hands, and have done their best to right them. In the occasional battles which have occurred they have exhibited a superior bravery and skill, one of their number being reckoned the equal of about half a dozen of any Indian tribe. They are the best of horse-men. The Sioux must dismount to fire with accuracy. A half-breed, from long practice in the buffalo hunts, will fire from horseback at full gallop without even taking a sight along the barrel, and that, too, with great rapidity and deadly effect, delivering half a dozen shots, before, behind, and on either side of him, while his horse is making a flying circuit within gun-shot distance of a Sioux war-party.

When St. Jo was laid out by the original settlers, each man was allotted not merely a portion of land sufficient for house and garden within the limits of the city, but also a farm fronting on the Pembina River, and therefore combining plenty of timber with the rich prairie land. Few of these farms, however, are cultivated. The people of St. Jo, like the French half-breeds of Red River, are buffalo-hunters by profession.

In the early spring their work begins. Before the snow is off the ground those who are intending to go out in the first summer hunts begin to look about after their horses and carts and cart-oxen. If they have no horses, they buy or hire them. If they have no carts, they set to work to make them—*quisque sua cartre fiber est*. There are no mechanics among them. Such things as they can not buy of the English or American traders they make for themselves or go without; so that nearly every able-bodied man is a chair-maker, house-builder, blacksmith, or

wagon-maker, as occasion demands. These carts thus made are, nevertheless, all of one pattern, and enough alike to have been machine-work. "Pembina buggy" is the honorary title which they receive from those who despair of otherwise making their jolts endurable—as one might call the stink-weed, rose. A wooden cart on two wheels is the simplest description of them. Wooden they are to the remotest parts. Leather linch-pins are not orthodox; and if the heresy of iron boxes has to any extent prevailed, it is only because imported from St. Paul. The fellos are wide and never tired. The hub is huge, and sometimes indulged with a girdle of raw buffalo hide, nailed on when wet and shrinking tight. There is a neat fence high as the wheel on each side of the cart body, and the wheels themselves are large and enormously dished. For from five to ten dollars apiece you may buy any number of these carts, so cheap is labor. Twelve hundred pounds can be piled into them on good roads; and even where there is a slough at every half-mile, and a corduroy road the rest of the way, they carry seven hundred pounds without often breaking. The draught animals are oxen almost exclusively, and these have harnesses of raw hides, of a primitive cut and of an infinite endurance. With as many carts as he can afford, and at least one fast buffalo-horse, with a gun of the Northwest pattern (price \$8 wholesale), and a full powder-horn and shot-pouch, the hunter is prepared to go to the plains.

But he never goes alone. He and his friends and neighbors make up a brigade—large or small, it is called a brigade; and the brigade is a traveling town sometimes—men and women, horses, oxen, dogs, and carts, tents, lodges, frying-pans,



ST. JOSEPH, FROM PEMBINA MOUNTAIN.

and all other housekeeping utensils that are portable, traveling together.

In last summer's hunt, for example, there were, in one brigade alone, 400 men carrying arms, 800 women and children, 800 horses, 500 oxen, 1000 carts, about 200 train-dogs, and as many more mongrel curs. The wants of these people are simple and few, and about as easily supplied on the prairie as in the settlements. As for the animals, herbivorous, they live on grass and water; carnivorous, they live on meat and water. The brigade deserves the name of a traveling community for another reason. They subject themselves to a code of laws on the prairie even more rigid than those in force at home. The latter end of June is the time of starting for the summer hunt, of August for the fall hunt.

A large camp of half-breeds on their way to the plains is a sight to be seen. Their dress is picturesque. Men and women both wear moccasins worked with gaudy beads. The men's trousers are generally of corduroy or Canada blue, and their coats of the Canadian pattern, with large brass buttons, and a hood hanging between the shoulders. A jaunty cap surmounts the head, often of blue cloth, but sometimes of an otter or badger skin; and, whether with the coat or without it, a gay sash is always worn around the waist, the bright tassels hanging down the left hip. Into this are thrust the buffalo-knife behind, and the fire-bag at the right side.

Although it was not until the writer's return, with two friends and a couple of half-breed guides and servants, by Turtle Mount and Devil's Lake, that he passed through the great buffalo ranges where the brigades always hunt, it is better to give the particulars of one of their chases, the pemmican making, etc., in this connection than to defer it to its proper chronological place.

Women, boys, and the supernumeraries of the brigade drive the carts, each one taking charge of two or three, and passing his or her time in belaboring the forward ox, and yelling to the hinder ones as they lag in the march. The hunters are mounted on fine horses, and relieve the tedium of the slow, wearisome travel with an occasional scamper after a badger seen scrambling to his hole; or a shot at a gray wolf, disturbed in his lurking-place in the long rushes of some deep marsh through which the train passes. Some of the hunters keep at a considerable distance from the train, on the look-out for buffalo and signs of hostile Indians. If the latter are near, the train divides into three sections, and travel in parallel lines.

The lowering and raising of the flag on the foremost cart is the sign to halt or start. At night they gather in a circle called a corral, where the carts are ranged side by side, with the shafts turned toward the centre of the circle, where the lodges and tents are raised, and the camp-fires made. The drudgery of the camp is performed by the half-breed women. When the train is in motion every separate wheel on every cart has its peculiar shriek. In camp these are

silent; but Babel is continued by all voices, each with its peculiar shrillness or vehemence of language, by the barkings of all the dogs, compassing every chromatic of the canine gamut, by the lowing of the oxen and the whinnying of horses, rolling and kicking up their heels in the grass. But in the midst of it all matters are going on, fires lighted, water boiling, potatoes cooking, pemmican frying, and bread baking; and before sunset supper is ready in most of the messes. After supper the pipe.

As the twilight deepens into dark, all the animals are brought into the inclosure made by the carts, and picketed there, the buffalo-runners receiving especial care; and the watch begins to control the camp. Numbers linger about the camp-fires, smoking and telling stories of buffalo-hunts, or listening to some older man as he recounts the early distresses of the colonists, the wars of the Northwest and Hudson's Bay Company, the long journey to Prairie du Chien for food and seeds, or some attack of the Sioux upon the hunters in a previous year. But before the light has entirely died out in the western sky all are wrapped in their blankets or robes—the sweet odor of kinnie-kinnie lingering in the air—and the low voices of the watchmen are interrupted only by the long howlings of distant wolves—long and exultant, sometimes, as if conscious that they are about to begin their annual feast upon the carcasses of buffalo.

Early in the morning, before sunrise, in the cold gray dawn, dew dabbling every spear of grass, the flags are raised, and at the sign, and sound of the horn sleepers rouse, the tents and lodges are struck by the women, the oxen harnessed into the carts and horses saddled by the men. The horn again sounds and the carts fall into line, and the hunters mount and the train is in motion. After about two hours of brisk travel the train halts an hour and a half for breakfast, and then pushes on again till the order is given to halt for dinner.

During the early part of the day which is to be described, no large herds had been seen; but all were in anxious expectation of falling in with one before the day ended, so frequent were the signs of their presence in the numerous trails—the fresh dung and the trampled grass in all the marshes looking like innumerable heaps of green jackstraws.

Just as the leader was sounding the horn which was the order to "catch up the horses," a rider was seen galloping at full speed down the hither side of a hill by which he had been hid from sight on the rolling prairie. All knew the message he had to bring before hearing it from his lips. He had seen a herd of hundreds steadily pushing their way over the prairie toward the northeast, just beyond a high ridge which was the limit of sight in the direction the brigade was then traveling—nearly due south. The oxen that had been harnessed were again loosed, all the buffalo-runners saddled, and every hunter eagerly examined his gun and ammunition. The horses too knew what was in the wind; and the more

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high-spirited ones among them, which had been trained to the hunt, stood shivering with excitement, snuffing the air, and pawing the ground with their hoofs, needing a man's strength to hold them in. All the able-bodied men were speedily armed and accoutred, their superfluous clothing thrown off, sashes tied tighter, and girths buckled a hole or two higher, and, in less than five minutes from the time the rider had got to camp, the leader had given the order to advance, and more than three hundred horsemen were steadily trotting southward in the direction of the herd. In a few moments they had reached a point where the ground began to rise gently to the height of the low ridge on the top of which they would be visible to the herd. Here all drew rein, while the leader, with one or two of the older hunters, dismounted and crept along up the slope to reconnoitre, observe the progress of the herd and the lay of the land, in order to determine from which direction the charge had better be made. There was little time to be lost; the buffalo were already opposite the hunters, and the old bulls ahead might, at any moment, take a trail leading over the ridge and in full sight of the train. A moment's glance told experienced eyes, peering through the tops of the long green grass, that the ground toward which they were moving was a rolling prairie with abrupt ascents and descents, and therefore full of badger-holes, dangerous alike to the horse and his rider, while the ground which they had just passed over was very nearly level, with here and there a marsh, and fenced in, so to speak, by the stream which ran hither and thither, and wound around by the dinner camp-ground. Hastening down the slope and remounting their horses, a few quick, low words from the leader explained the order of the charge. A dozen or more of the fleetest runners were sent to the westward around the ridge to head the herd and start them back. The rest of the hunters gathered under its edge *arrectis auribus*. The ruse was successful. The dozen hunters coming boldly into sight directly in their path, and spreading out slowly to the right and left without chasing them, and the favorable nature of the ground, making it harder for them to go to the one side or the other than backward, turned them almost in their tracks. The herd was not so large but that very many of the buffaloes could see the hunters. The sage and long-bearded veterans who had led them stopped, were crowded ahead a few yards by the pressure of those behind, and then all were huddling together, cows and calves in the centre, and the bulls crowding around, until the leaders broke through and led off at a steady gallop on the back track. This was the critical moment. The dozen hunters shouted at the tops of their lungs, and settled into a steady gallop on their trail. The three hundred and fifty horsemen came flying over the ridge and down its slope in full pursuit, and in front of them all, not a quarter of a mile away, a herd of near a thousand buffaloes in headlong flight, tails out, heads down, and nostrils red and flar-

ing. For the first few hundred yards the chase was "nip and tuck." The buffaloes were doing their best possible, as they always can at the beginning of a chase, and the horses had not so good ground, and were hardly settled down to their work. But soon the tremendous strides of the buffalo-runners began to tell in the chase, and the heavy headlong and forehanded leap of the buffalo to grow just perceptibly slacker. One after another the swiftest of the runners caught up to the herd, and soon hunters and hunted were one indistinguishable mass thundering over the plain. The green sward is torn up, clouds of dust arise, swift shots like volleys of musketry buffet the air, the hunters fly along with loosened rein, trusting to their horses to clear the badger holes that here and there break the ground, and to keep their own flanks and the rider's legs from the horns of the buffaloes by whom they must pass to get alongside the fat and swifter cow singled out for prey. And still they keep up this tremendous gait, flying buffalo and pursuing horsemen. As fast as one fires he draws the plug of his powder-horn with his teeth, pours in a hasty charge, takes one from his mouthful of wet bullets and drops it without wadding or rammer upon the powder, settles it with a blow against the saddle, keeps the muzzle lifted till he is close to his game, then lowers and fires in the same instant without an aim, the muzzle of the gun often grazing the shaggy monster's side; then leaning off, his horse wheels away, and loading as he flies, he spurs on in chase of another, and another, and another; and in like manner the three hundred of them. One after one the buffaloes lagged behind, staggered, and fell, at first singly and then by scores, till in a few moments the whole herd was slain save only a few old bulls not worth the killing, which were suffered to gallop safely away. One after one the hunters drew rein, and dismounting from their drenched horses, walked back through the heaps of dead buffalo and the puddles of blood, singlin; out of the hundreds dead with unerring certainty the ones they had shot. Not a dispute arose among the hunters as to the ownership of any buffalo killed. To a novice in the hunt they all looked alike, differenced only by size and sex, and the plain on which all were lying was in each square rod the fac-simile of every other square. The novices had thrown on their killed a sash or coat or knife-sheath; but the best hunters had no need of this. To their keen eyes no two rods were alike, and they could trace their course as easily as if only four and not thousands of hoofs had torn the plain.

The carts driven by the women come up, knives are drawn, and with marvelous dexterity the shaggy skins are stripped off, the great, bloody frame divided, huge bones and quivering flesh, all cut into pieces of portable size, the carts loaded, and by sunset all are on their way to camp.

At St. Jo all our plans underwent a change. It became clear that the leader of the expedition

could never justify the "lofty and high sounding phrases of his manifesto," and that it was even doubtful if we should be able to get through the mountains before snow fall, to say nothing of returning overland. One of the scientific gentlemen returned to St. Paul from St. Jo by private conveyance. Another left the expedition at the same place, preferring to go to the Selkirk Settlement. There remained only our one geologist and botanist to represent science, the through passengers for Fraser River, the leader, and Joseph and I. Our horses were growing lean, excepting only tough, lazy, imperturbable Dan Rice. Joseph parted with tears from Lady Mary, exchanging her for a light Indian pony, to whose education he henceforth devoted all his leisure. We obtained at St. Jo a half-breed attendant, determining to be the masters of our own movements, and planning to go as far as possible with the expedition, and return through the buffalo-ranges and by Devil's Lake, and the Sioux country to Pembina, by the first of September, ending our tour with a visit to the Selkirk Settlement, and an overland journey thence, southwest, to Crow Wing and home. This we did.

"Joe" was the patronymic of our French half-breed attendant; by no means Saint Joe. Tall, muscular, with long black hair and the mandibles of an alligator, he yet walked in a lame, clumsy way, and wore shoes instead of moccasins. Both his feet had been frozen, and of one all the toes, and of the other half the metacarpal bones also, had been amputated. He was hunting buffalo with a dog-train, the dogs ran away and left him alone in the snow, where for ten days he lived, and nights he slept, without food by day or blankets by night: on the last day rescued by Indians, who found him insensible and nearly frozen to death. His work was only to take care of our horses and mules, fetch wood and water, help the cook, and drive the carts. A sinister look in the eye was the index to the rascally part of him. For three or four days he was the best of new brooms; from that time forth he began to shirk his work, finally even shamming crazy and playing the deuce with our time and attention, till we had driven him out of his lunacy into a genuine but ignominious stupidity equally fatal to our interests. It was more than the fellow was worth to cart his one hundred and seventy pounds along with us. But of all this we could suspect nothing when we hired him—so polite was the rascal, so handy at mending an old cart which had nonplused our metropolitan fingers, so guileless in his speech. We hired him for, I forget how much, a month, and the next morning after the bargain was struck began to pay for the whistle. He must have pemmican, and flour, and tea to leave with his wife, who was soon to be confined, and then some cloth for his shirts, and then a pair of shoes, and then would "my master" please to give Joe a sovereign to buy wine for his poor wife, and "my master" wouldn't think that Joe could leave no money with his wife; and so it came to

pass that, with his necessities and his wheedling, he obtained more than his wages before he began his work. This sort of credit system, however, is usual among the half-breeds. Like the Indians they pass their lives in paying their debts, and have to be trusted with the means of enabling them to do it.

Michelle Klein, our faithful guide and cook, was a better than average specimen of the half-breed. More than fifty years old, he was yet as active as a boy, and light-hearted as a girl. By virtue of those qualities which are always rare in any party of men, early in the morning, during rain-storms or when cattle have strayed, he became a kind of privileged character, was permitted to joke with all, and the one to whom all jokes were addressed, not worth an English coat but put in tattered French. He had lived his present life of voyageur, hunter, guide, etc., for thirty or forty years, and was accomplished in it. He had been a guide in the passes of the Rocky Mountains, north of the Kootenais Pass, for twelve years, and his knowledge of that region, and of the valley of Fraser River, and of the Saskatchewan, and Assiniboine was his capital. Poplar groves, low sand-hills, and marshes, which the ordinary observer seems to see the duplicates of a thousand times in one month's travel, were to him as separate and distinct as if the whole country had been mapped with minute topography. He never failed to notice the tracks over barren places that we crossed, buffalo, elk, antelope, or human footprints; and the breath of smoke beyond the farthest purple hills, light and evanescent as any summer cloud, he would at once distinguish, camp-fire, or prairie-fire. A good shot, as it was well for one to be who had gone many a month with only a rifle and blanket between him and every fatal possibility, he didn't mind a ducking for a small bird on the coldest day. He knew the times and seasons for all the game in the valleys or on the prairie. In nothing more than his views of astronomy did he show how completely the people of Red River have been shut out from the rest of the world. Indeed he represented not only the manners and customs of more than half a century ago, but for his theory of the heavens and earth he went behind Kepler. He believed that the sun revolves around the earth as it appears to do; conceived the earth as one great plain, this side the only one buttered with a population, and merrily laughed at the idea of going westward till the west is east and returning so to the place of beginning. His arguments were those of the Pope and the persecutors of Galileo. The water would drop out of the rivers and lakes and sea if they were turned the upside down, and as for the immense plain on which we live, why, it rests on an elephant, and the elephant stands on the back of a tortoise, and the tortoise on a snake, and the snake has a kink in his convolutions which gives him a purchase whereby he holds up all.

From St. Jo our course was northwest, a direction which led us along over the prairie at the foot of Pembina Mountain for two days and then

across it. Pembina Mountain is 210 feet high. In fact it is no mountain at all, nor yet a hill, but only a terrace of table-land, the ancient shore of a great body of water which once filled the whole of the Red River Valley. The summit is quite level, and extends so for five miles westward, to another terrace level with the buffalo plains which stretch on to the Missouri. The same terrace may be traced northward, and south to the high land near the head of the Sheyenne

River and Devil's Lake. Of the prairie country beyond, and of the Red River generally, our observations confirmed the truth of Owen's statement, that the limestones of the Red River form the basis of a large portion of it. They are highly magnesian, having 17 to 40 per cent. of alkaline earth.

Another of these Nature's steps from a lower to a higher level may be traced from Turtle Mount on the 40th parallel to the banks of Swan River, in 52° 30', and even around to Basqua Hill, says Sir George Simpson, on the waters of the lower Saskatchewan. Like Pembina Mountain, this ridge, whose sand-hills we afterward crossed, was once the shore of a vast inland sea. When its height determined the boundary of the great body of waters, not only the Red River Valley, but also Lakes Winnipeg, Manitoba, and Winnipegosis, with many of their feeders, were themselves engulfed. The largest of the three great fragments of the primeval sheet of waters, viz., Lake Winnipeg, still continues to retire from its western side and to encroach on its eastern bank.

Our first camping-place was in a cluster of beautiful oak groves, from which, at four or five miles' distance, we had this view of the Pembina Mountain plateau.

Here we began a more careful watch. At night the man on guard put out the camp-fires as soon as all had retired, allowed the smudges to smoke but not blaze, lit his pipe behind his hat, and, in short, "kept shady." But even danger in time became commonplace.

Crossing the Pembina Mountain, the views of distant prairies, lakes, streams, woods, the glimpses which we caught of the nearer valleys, and the brooks which ran down them through sunny and shady places, an abrupt wild cliff, with here and there granite and limestone boulders tumbled about on clayey shale, tinged with iron like the redness of the autumn leaves, the richness of the green grass, the strength and youth of the green leaves, filled the day with beauty.

Of every day the beginning was a sunrise and the ending a sunset, with the whole round arch of heaven for the great display. Shut up in cities we never see all their beauty, the wonder of every new day, and the miracle of the closing night. Looking out of a window, or down a street, we catch at the end of the vista a framed glimpse of brilliant coloring, but the whole large effect in the wide circle of the heavens we utterly miss; the more delicate but not less beautiful change of colors behind, on either side and overhead; the grand tidal flow of light descending or of shade arising in the horizon opposite the sun; the infinitely various tinting of its clouds, which no succeeding second leaves the same; its tender neutral tints, the cool grays, and the deeper blue; and over all, perhaps, as the sun goes down, a flaming dome of red.

The next day, at high noon, we scared up our first elk. He saw us when we were half a mile away, and rushed from the poplar grove which we were heading for to a more distant one at a



PEMBINA MOUNTAIN.

rate setting our weary horse-flesh at defiance. But the prospect of killing an elk was no more to be resisted than the glimpse of office flashed upon a hopeless nominee; and so half a dozen of us capped our rifles and cantered along in the track of his great leaps, faintly hoping to surround him in some of the poplar clumps, till we saw him shake his antlers proudly and plunge into an alder swamp two or three miles away, after which we cantered back again. That night our mosquito and gnat miseries culminated. Alkaline water in the swamps by which we had camped ruined the flavor of our tea, and gave all our horses and mules what Joseph called "an elementary canal enlargement."

Speaking of mules reminds me of a scurvy trick my mule played me in return for considerate kindness. One day I noticed that Mule's shoulder was getting sore, and therefore put Dan Rice in the cart and saddled his successor. Out of respect to a fraternal affection, rare among human brutes, I refrain from mentioning his indisposition to go before or remain far behind the train. Sixty musical clefs would not hold in their bars the notes of his bellowing. But presently strawberries, red and ripe, tempted me off his back. Essaying to remount Mule, into whom must have transmigrated the crazy soul of some defunct geometer, he suddenly seemed to behold in me his centre, conceived himself a radius, and proposed to pass the rest of his life in describing a complimentary circumference, his tail doing the tangents. Whirling away a half hour thus, my patience became Rarey-fied, and I made a desperate leap for his back, caught one toe

in the stirrup, and so began a half-mile gallop, outdoing circus Mazeppas. In time, this became tedious, and I jumped off, lighting on all-fours, and happily preserving the integrity of my meersch-aum, mother Earth receiving me in her green lap.

No one saw my mishap; but I trudged along quietly after the vanishing ass, and in an hour or two overtook the train and him. Experience had made me wiser. Reviving forgotten high-bar gymnastics, I got him where he could not turn, and leaped square into the saddle. Then, for six or eight miles, spurs, bit, and I fought Mule, his heels and his vices, and helped him conquer them. Poor brute! on our return he fell sick. We dragged him along behind the cart for a day or two, and since he got no better, but only worse, and could hardly walk, we left him on the open prairie, cutting a heap of green grass for his bed and board, clipping his ear for a property-mark, and praying that the wolves might spare him. Good old mule! you served us well, and I couldn't help choking at the throat as I caught the last glimpse of your long neck stretched out as you lay there, loth to believe that we would desert you. If the "stern reader" derides my grief, O dead ass, you shall not meet again! Oh for the Mustang Herac Liniment that might have spared us all!

I forgot to say that we used to rest in camp one day in seven, Sunday the day, as often as was possible. Then our trousers and morals were mended, or, at least, patched up to appear a little better, the emigrants greased afresh their cart-wheels and their good resolutions, and washed



PRAIRIE FIRE.



MOUSE RIVER.

away their sweat in the nearest river or lake. The man of science divided his time between Paul's Epistles and the compound microscope, and gave us lectures from the latter, which helped our exegesis of the former, giving us wiser eyes to see the wonderful works of God. Another polished the hand mirror in which he was accustomed to view, in his opinion, the best specimen of the "noblest work." Joseph and I indulged in a theological disputation, and all of us ended the day generally by gathering about the campfire after supper and singing Old Hundred, Balerna, Dundee, Ward, and other tunes of that sort.

On the first of August we crossed a valley called by Michelle, our guide, La Belle Vallée. Its appearance was like the deserted channel of a beautiful river, such as the Upper Mississippi would be if its waters had passed away and seas of long green grass filled their place.

Mound Prairie, a plain dotted here and there with mounds too few to make a rolling prairie of it, and with one regular cone-shaped and higher mound in the centre, giving it its name, was just beyond La Belle Vallée. The next day, from the last of a range of high hills, to which Joseph and I galloped, away from the train, we caught

sight, for the first time, of the faint blue line in the northern horizon which marked the course of the Assiniboine. At the west were the range of low hills beyond which, said Michelle, was the Mouse River. Between were innumerable lakes—some salt and some fresh—shallow ones fringed with green or black rushes, and deep ones wooded to the banks, with dark shadows underneath, or surrounded by green slopes, and reflecting the whole blue of heaven. Away to the right was a column of smoke, where the careless dropping of a match had set the prairie on fire. Mouse River ran along within a mile of our camping-ground that night; and the next morning, as soon as breakfast was over, Joseph and I hurried on to its banks.

There was every variety of color in the beautiful landscape which met our eyes; brilliant prairie flowers in the foreground, or growing in the debris tumbled down from the bluff on which we sat. The trees, down upon whose tops we looked—as flying birds see forests—the rushes and ranker grass near the river's margin, the exquisite cool grays of the sandy beach defined in such graceful curves by the brilliant blue reflected from the water, the thick verdurous underbrush, here and there sentinelled by stately trees,

which covered the plain beyond the river; the lighter green upon the long level meadow seen at the right of the river in the sketch, with troops of shadows chasing each other over its surface; and far beyond—miles away—the dark brown of the opposite cliffs, and the faint, hazy blue of hills in the extremest distance.

As I sat, trying to put on paper the briefest outline memoranda to recall this splendid landscape, a large gray eagle came sailing along the air, and hovered high above us. I fired with my rifle and hit him, knocking out a few tail-feathers; but not fatally, for he only tumbled, fluttering three or four times his own wing-spread, and then, as if more scared than hurt, recovered himself and flew off into upper air. Afterward we saw him hanging over the river; a strong breeze was blowing, but, without an apparent stroke of his pinions, he kept himself steadily poised and balanced in the same spot, head bent looking downward, and body level.

Here, too, after a long chase and considerable "circumvention," we shot at the first antelopes seen by us. Their quick, long jumps took them out of rifle-range too soon to give us a second chance.

These were our most delightful days. The nights were pleasantly cool, and we slept well despite the mosquitoes. The days were full of enjoyment, each one rewarding our labor of travel with some new beauty of landscape or of sky, some hidden beauty under our feet. The horses jogged comfortably along, their hoofs now and then crushing heap of cacti, which reminded us of Southern deserts and torrid heats, the comparison cooling us; or the cart-wheels, as we drove through and among the clumps of white poplar and spotted alder, sinking into the elastic carpet of running cedar and trailing arbutus. In such places Joseph and I dismounted as quickly as if the odorous carpet was from the loom which wove the carpet of the Arabian Prince; and there—happy as princes ought to be, but never are—we whiled away the summer afternoons till long shadows warned us to hurry on after the train, Joseph reading Tennyson and Bryant, whom he carried in blue and gold; the tones of his voice or the scratch of my pencil never frightening the trustful brown-birds that hopped about us, not afraid sometimes to skip on an extended foot or arm, where they stood and chirped and cocked their tiny heads this way and that, but



FORT ELLICE.

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never whispered the wise things and the secrets which they might have told. Sand-hill cranes—huge birds, delicious to eat, and worth creeping a hundred rods to shoot—would start from many hollows as we came up over the nearest hill, and we could see their ungainly majesties putting on airs and stalking about on the top of distant sand-hills, taking care to fly before we were within rifle-shot, and mocking us with their clanging cry till their white, van-like wings were faint white specks in the distant air.

Monday, the 8th of August, we camped near a knoll whence the Assiniboine and the tributaries of Qu'Appelle River were both visible. Fort Ellice, to which we were journeying, was two or three miles this side of the junction of these two rivers. Our leader had persisted that we were going too far north to strike the fort; and a few days before had become so convinced that his own practiced ignorance was superior to the guide's uneducated knowledge (for Michelle had been so stupid as to travel all over the country without any compass save the sun in bright days, and the compass-weed in cloudy ones), that he had ordered our line of direction to be changed more to the west. As a consequence, the next day we had to return to the northeast—losing one or two days' travel—to strike the fort; and found, when there, that the scape-graces heretofore mentioned, who had traveled over the two sides of the right-angled triangle whose hypothenuse we described, had passed two or three days before—though, to be sure, we had had science and a fearful amount of experience in our aid; and they had stupidly followed their noses and the advice of those who, like Michelle, had been over the road.

Early the next morning we struck the hunters' trail from Fort Ellice (S.W.) to Moosehead Mountain, and galloped our horses in its ruts for miles in a frenzy of delight. It was the road which led to London and Paris and New York, and all the centres of civilization and wealth and knowledge in the world. For days and days we had gone pathless; but here was a trail, and all along its triple tracks—miles away, to be sure—were lying the beauties and the wonders of the world, and home and friends.

On we galloped, homeward, for a dozen miles or so, Joseph and I, and got to Fort Ellice an hour or two before the train, and just in time to escape a thorough wetting in a heavy thunder-storm. All about the stockades were Indian lodges, and crowds of the copper-colored Hin-wathas came out to see us. Villainous vermilion, lamp-black, and yellow-ochre disfigured their earthly habitations with hideous symbols, among which appeared some repulsive representations of the Deity; and vermilion, lamp-black, and yellow-ochre disfigured also the tenements in which their half-starved souls were housed. The rain fell faster, and we hurried into the inclosure of the fort, gave our horses to one of the half-breed attendants standing about, and carried our saddle-bags into the main room of the house occupied by the trader in charge, Mr.

William M'Kay. He soon came in, dripping with rain, and welcomed his unexpected guests in the friendliest way. Disappearing for a few moments in one of the family rooms which opened into this main hall on either side, he presently came out in dry clothes, with pipes and tobacco—kinnie-kinnie and dried winter-green leaves for our smoking—and we drew our chairs up for an exchange of news and information. Presently dinner was served, and we sat down to fresh buffalo-steaks, hot bread, rice-pudding, strawberry-pie, and hyson tea well decocted. The table was of plain wood, painted a greenish-brown, and the chairs—heavy oak, high-backed, and substantial—were made by half-breeds, and the Belgian giant might have sat upon them with impunity. The hospitality with which we were entertained here was one of the pleasantest incidents of our journey; and it is to the Hudson's Bay Company's credit that they so carefully select men who possess both the *suaviter in modo* to the passing traveler, and the *Zouaviter in modo* to scape-grace Indians. While we were at dinner one of Mr. M'Kay's Indian retainers sat on the floor in the adjoining apartment, and devoured his buffalo-steak as happily as if happy to sit below the salt; and his half-breed wife waited upon her lord's guests at table. Mr. M'Kay was born in the country, however, and had never been nearer civilization than Red River, his father having served the Company before him.

The Qu'Appelle, or Calling River, is the principal tributary of the Assiniboine River; which, in its turn, is the principal tributary of Red River. It enters from the west, a few miles above the great south bend of the Assiniboine, and just at Fort Ellice. It is the river whose head-waters are linked to the head-waters of a considerable tributary of the great Saskatchewan; and an English engineer has proposed to dig a canal connecting the two, in order to turn the waters of the south branch of the Saskatchewan into the Qu'Appelle and Assiniboine, so enlarging those streams as to make them navigable at all seasons of the year; and thus, by avoiding the great rapids at the mouth of the Saskatchewan, to create a shorter, straighter, and unobstructed channel from Red River Settlement to the foot of the Rocky Mountains. The cost would certainly not be so expensive as the Erie Canal; and when the inducements are as great as those which aided that project, doubtless another De Witt Clinton will be born.

We staid for several days at the fort; and one of our day's tramps in the vicinity was to the junction of the Qu'Appelle and the Assiniboine—a view worth all the work it cost us.

For three or four miles we followed the winding trail through beautiful groves, here and there broken up by lakes and ponds covered with ducks, and at last came to a long descent through a magnificent forest of poplars. The daylight was sifted through the dense foliage overhead into cool shadows, and on every side the beautiful gray trunks environed us, shutting out all glimps-



JUNCTION OF THE ASSINIBOINE AND QU'APPELLE RIVERS.

es of the outer world. At every few rods we scared away a flock of pigeons that went whirling through the leaves and branches. At the foot of the bluff was the Qu'Appelle, which we struck a mile or two from its mouth. Tying the horses, we paddled over on a few planks loosely tinkered together, and pushing through the forest, which nearly covered the bottom land, came at last in full view of a splendid bluff, higher than Bunker Hill Monument, and looking like a huge fortification which Milton's angels might have built after the great combat. There is nothing at the East like the grand view from this high bluff. We could trace the windings of either river by the giant embankments which confined their waters. Here and there we beheld broad stretches of water where it widened out, sweeping broadly and indolently around some projecting point, or caught brilliant glimpses of its narrower channels through the thick green tree-tops which we overlooked. Far off to either horizon the gorge winds hither and thither, the near bluffs flanked successively by the more distant ones, a deeper color or a dimmer haze indicating the junction of some tributary stream, the vast expanse of green tree-tops checkered by the shad-

ows of passing clouds. An eagle drifted down the air miles away, and flocks of pigeons were winging their short swift flights from the summit of one poplar grove to another, in their flight overlooking all this wide expanse, and then suddenly sinking through the leaves out of the warm air and bright heaven of sunlight into the cool shadows of the forest.

The point where the rivers met was in the low bottom land between the bluffs, three miles away from where we stood, and after wandering about the bluffs for miles up and down to get the finest views, we laid our course for that. Through sand plains, where an Indian had trudged along before us, digging with his tipsini-stick, and leaving the track of his moccasins with toes turned in, one foot straight before the other, we laboriously plodded. Little spires of grass, two or three spears in each, came up through the sand, and around every one circles were traced, where the wind, sweeping through the hollows, had bent their tips to the ground—circles as perfect as the Italian drew and thought it proved he could build a cathedral. Between the clumps of poplar, further on, our path was paved with a more beautiful Mosaic than any in cathedral

aisles. The lines were drawn in the deepest green, vines of running cedar, and the interspaces filled with an elastic carpet of grayish red sand or pale gray moss of the loveliest tint. Wading then through six or eight hundred yards of marsh-rushes high as our shoulders, and then plunging into and through a half mile of the thickest underbrush, stumbling over fallen trees, and tearing our corduroys among the dense and tangled thorn-brakes where was scarcely a square foot of empty air, suddenly we came upon the point of land which marked the junction of the rivers. Indians in their canoes and traders in their batteaux have passed it many times; but not this century has it been seen from that point, surely, by any other eyes than ours.

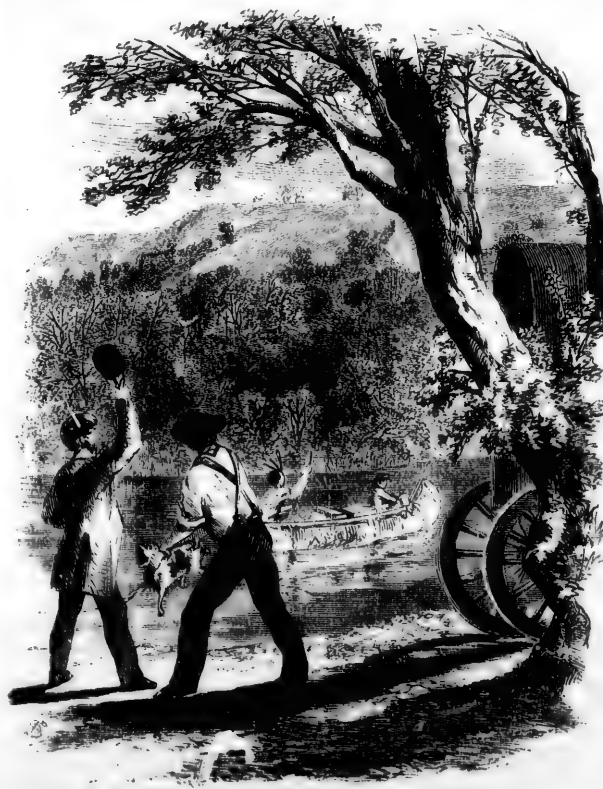
The bank where we stood was nearly perpendicular, the tree roots projecting its top ten feet above the water. Opposite, the bank was of shelving sand. There was as much water in the Assiniboine above the junction as in the Minnesota at the same season of the year. The sand-banks and bars, strewn with broken fragments of trees and other débris, and the concavities in the low banks, proved the recurrence of spring overflows. Both the Assiniboine and the Qu'Appelle were

turbid, but not so much so as Red River. The Assiniboine had the lightest and swiftest current, the Qu'Appelle the largest and deepest.

Returning to camp by the cool purple light of a sunset sky, we heard as we neared the tents, which were pitched half a mile from the fort, the Indians who were camped about the stockades, singing, beating their drums, and dancing the war-dance. They were a small war-party just returned from an expedition against the Sioux, and brought back as their trophies a scalp dried and stretched upon a hoop and a human hand. Their monotonous thumps upon the drums divided and measured the silence, and presently the hideous chanting of the men, alternating with the softer antiphone of the women and children, broke upon the air. As we approached the fort the scene was more plainly visible. The red camp-fire lighted up their skin lodges and the tall stockades, and made more impenetrable the thick darkness of the ravine through which Beaver Creek ran, nearly two hundred feet below. This scalp dance they keep up for the victory with faces joyfully black, every night and morning till the snow falls, the women joining the dance, and the little children, naked coppers

that can barely toddle, taught to whet their puny passions into the fierceness of adult hate and revenge as faithfully as we teach the little ones we love to fold their hands, close their eyes, and pray night and morning to "Our Father in heaven." A woman danced and beat with her hands this fresh scalp, and a little child mocked its elders with the bloody white hand dangling from its neck.

The Indians passed their days in gambling mainly, the squaws in making moccasins. At the risk of adding to our traveling population we passed an afternoon in their lodges, introducing ourselves to their good graces with tobacco. In one tent a dozen of the dirty tribe were playing poker with greasy cards; bullets the stakes. A wrinkled old hag joined them, as loud-mouthed certainly, and as filthy



PARTING WITH THE DOCTOR.

of manner and speech—so our interpreter said—as any of them. In another lodge two of the women were sewing moccasins and playing with their babies triced up in their standing cradles. The men dawdled or played cards, and raced horses, or set their dogs on a young buffalo-heifer owned at the fort, or hung around our tents watching all our motions, and trying to get a chance to steal even an old nail; the women only worked. And whoever undertakes the civilization of these savages must begin with the women, if he would ever see any fruit of his labors.

Dr. C. L. Anderson, our geologist and botanist, left us here to descend the Assiniboine to Fort Garry in a birch canoe, with a single Indian guide, who could not speak a word of English. Two of us carried his canoe and traps in a wagon down to the river where he was to begin his journey, and saw him safely loaded and embarked. The Doctor had been our consulting scientific dictionary; and we regretted only the loss of his society more than the privation of looking upon nature, bays and breezes, rocks, strata, alluvial deposits, temperatures, isothermals and plants, cryptogamous and other, alone, and with very unsuitable glasses. Besides, he took his microscope away from him, and so shut up the door to one of our two Infinities, though, to be sure, it didn't require a microscope to unvail the infinite littleness of some things which he left behind him. Lacking a shoe to throw after the Doctor for luck, Joseph took the biggest of two fighting dogs that had followed our wagon and pitched him into the middle of the river as the Indian paddled away down the stream, his charge hardly daring to look over his shoulder for fear of upsetting the canoe.

The same day our party broke up. The Fraser River boys had quite completed their outfits, and supplied the place of the leader of the expedition, who declined to go any further with them, with a guide familiar with the country, and who promised to put them well on their way for the Kootonai Pass before leaving them.

Joseph, whom they all loved, went on a few miles with them, and we who were now on our return journey, had to cut sticks and leave them in the trail slanting the way we had gone—an aid to the pilgrim's progress, which he stoutly resented when he caught up with us at nightfall. There is no report extant of those parting moments; but it has been conjectured that Joseph made them an affecting speech, in which it is to be hoped he dilated upon the superiority of instinct over the mariner's compass for the purposes of northwest explorers, and the great advantage to be gained in the long-run by making mules and horses travel in the summer months eight hours continuously, through the heat of the day, instead of in the cool of the morning and evening. If he did not, then the "frightful example" which we carried with us all summer failed to teach its proper lesson. One thing is certain, the little blue and gold copy of Bryant's Poems which had consoled us so far he gave to

one of the emigrants, and if he keeps up his old habits of spouting, it is quite likely to prove untrue that the "Oregon hears no sound save his own dashings."

Our leader here traded off the tent, which several of the party had helped him to buy, for a young Buffalo cow, henceforth the companion of our journeyings. Our share in the cow was the amusement her antics afforded us, and the pleasure we enjoyed in having our daily rate of travel slackened for her benefit, about twenty per cent. "Jessie"—for that was her name—had an indisposition to keep her nose at a fixed distance from the ground, and also objected to having the chain, which held her to the tail-board of the Colonel's wagon, in contact with her bare skull. So on the first Sunday after leaving Fort Ellice we halted all day, and the great buffalo tamer constructed a pair of tongs and a ring, which, with infinite labor, he at last succeeded in getting into the cow's nose. She could not stand as much pulling on her Schneiderian membrane as upon her horns, and so was more tractable; but now and then she would butt the heavy loaded wagon out of the ruts with tremendous vigor, or, getting down on her knees, topple it over, or lie down herself and be pulled along by horns and nose in a shocking way. A little colt, that was under the protection of Joe and his mare, soon lost its first awe of the strange monster, and came to a realizing sense of the fact that the cow could not chase him very far, whatever her pretensions; and it was his especial delight to come galloping up at full speed behind the cow, and, wheeling within safe limits, kick up his heels at poor "Jessie," who, whether frightened or tormented, generally made the Colonel's seat an uneasy one for a few moments after.

The first day out we met a small party of plain hunters who reported twenty Sioux at Turtle Mountain, and one brigade of hunters returned to White Horse Plains. Of course we kept a closer watch, though the event proved it needless.

The blue, timber-skirted line of the Assiniboine was visible on our left for a day or two, and we crossed two of its small tributary streams in the first and second days' journey. The country had the same general character as that before described—a little more marshy, perhaps, but the same slightly rolling prairie land, with here and there poplar groves. Three or four days after leaving Fort Ellice, we noticed several prairie-fires on the horizon, and presently came upon the fresh tracks of Indians. They could hardly have been two hours before us, but fortunately our paths coincided only a little way.

On Wednesday, the 17th of August, about noon, we came upon our own old trail, by which we had gone needlessly so much to the west of Fort Ellice; then we were twenty, now but five. Following it backward, we nooned at a beautiful spot, between the range of sand-hills of which I have before spoken and a lake, where we had had a strawberry feast twelve days before. Not a berry remained. Leaving here the Moosehead



FORDING AT THE SAND-HILLS.

Mountain and Fort Garry trail for the open country, we traveled on, and before nightfall struck the Turtle Mountain trail, choosing a camping-ground just beyond Calumet or Pipe River (a tributary of the Assiniboine), which at this point was forty feet wide and about four feet deep.

Eight or ten miles from this camping-ground was Mouse River. On the north side of it were high sand-hills, some of them wooded to the top, and from their summits we had a magnificent view of the country in every direction.

These hills are a favorite camping-ground of the plain hunters. Deep, well-worn trails converge here from every direction, and the prairie, at the foot of the hills, is covered with the debris of old encampments, broken buffalo-bones, tufts of hair, frames for drying the meat preparatory to powdering it for pemmican, old moccasins, strips of calico, broken lodge poles, fragments of blue crockery of the Hudson's Bay Company pattern, and fire holes were dug in the earth at convenient intervals.

Fording the river in some rapids, where the water was about one hundred feet wide and from four to six feet deep, and pressing through the thick willow clumps and the oak groves which skirt the banks of the rim of the stream, we camped in a little hollow near the river where the ground was relieved against the sky within gunshot on every side except that toward the river.

While Joe was curing his lunacy by rigging "his masters" a mosquito net, Michelle and I rigged a couple of poles, and went for a string of fish. We caught a fine mess of white-fish, and,

for aught I know, might have continued adding to the string till now. They bit very freely, and played splendidly. The meat was not unlike that of Connecticut River shad, though, if possible, more delicate, with fewer bones. The eagles and fish-hawks envied us our sport; for several of them circled in the air over our heads, and when we landed our prey, they often swooped low enough for us to have struck them with our lance-wood tips.

From this time till we reached Pembina Mountain, Michelle and Joe lived in constant fear of an attack of the Sioux, and the former always chose a camping-ground protected like the present one. For ourselves we had little fear, though we kept a careful watch; for we knew that all the warriors of that tribe had gone further south to a great treaty-making with our Indian agents, and for a few weeks our line of travel, however dangerous at any other time, was quite safe to a well-armed party like ours.

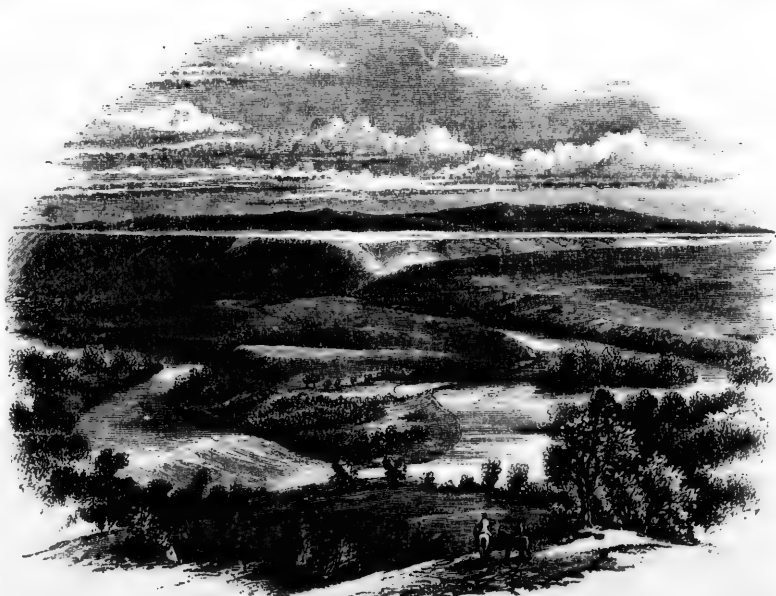
We had now entered upon the great buffalo ranges, and had not traveled ten miles before we saw a few bulls, six or eight miles to the east. I mounted Dan Rice and trotted slowly off in their direction, hoping to turn them toward the train, which kept steadily on its way. But while making my way through a piece of low marshy ground they got out of sight. Returning to the trail I met Joseph, who had remained behind to write up his journal. As we drew nearer to the train we saw the Colonel mount Fireaway, and canter off at a lively rate to the east, beckoning us to follow him. We put spurs to our horses and galloped on. He had seen a bull and calf de-

ascending into a deep *coulee* for water, and following his directions, we beat it up for a few rods, until we met him returning from the opposite direction. While we stood there wondering what had become of the creatures, they broke cover far beyond us, and started over the prairie at a steady gallop, the calf taking the lead. We all joined the chase, though the prairie was full of badger-holes and the game small. The excitement and the hope of a good supper were too much to resist. Fireaway's tremendous leaps soon took him outside the animals and turned them toward us. By skillful riding the Colonel separated the calf, which ran like a young antelope, from the old bull, and, with one well-directed shot, which broke his back-bone just behind the skull, tumbled him to the ground, dead.

The old bull galloped away; but in the course of the afternoon the train came up to where he had halted, and Joseph, mounted on his light pony, Lady Jane, made a beautiful chase, and shot the fellow not ten rods from the trail. It was a barren triumph for Joseph, however; for the monster, though he had run so well and died game, had a hind-leg stiff with spavin, and besides had been badly gored, so that nothing of him was fit to eat save the tongue, which he would have spared to have kept Michelle's unruly member from wagging—Michelle, who knew a lame buffalo from a well one a thousand miles away.

Michelle dissected the calf with a dexterity which, if employed upon a human subject, would have insured him a Wood prize at the Bellevue Hospital, and for two days our larder was full.

Traveling as we were without a trail, the mariner's compass and the primitive intuitions of our leader again came in conflict. As it happened the latter conquered for a time, and so we were secured a visit to the great south bend of Mouse River and the Hare mountains, which, if we had followed Michelle's instructions and taken a bee-line from Fort Ellice to Turtle Mountain, we should never have seen. On the afternoon of the 19th, as we were journeying slowly along, Jessie, the buffalo-cow, trotting comfortably behind the Colonel's wagon, Joe bringing up the carts, Joseph and I jogging along on our horses; and Michelle far ahead on foot with his rifle, keeping to his direction of "south 60° east" around and over hills, down valleys and through marshes, as steadily as if electric currents had polarized him into perpetual fealty to that point of the compass, we began to discern from the high points of land high ridges at the east which seemed gradually rising higher and higher in a line about parallel with our course. These grew to mountains (or what are called such, in the absence of larger specimens) the next day. Joe, who had sworn to us that he had wintered at Turtle Mountain, thought it was that veritable peak which we now saw, although so much farther to the east than we had expected. Michelle preserved a discreet non-committalism, asserting that from one point of view it did look like Turtle Mountain, and then again it didn't. His defense of his own remembrances had succeeded so poorly against primitive instincts in another case that he was not disposed to say too much. The Colonel con-



SOUTH BEND OF MOUSE RIVER.

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cluded that it was Turtle Mountain, and that he had all along been in the right in urging Michelle to keep a course further to the east. So the train was turned to the north of east, and we pushed straight for the highest peak. By the middle of the afternoon we were near enough to see that a river and wide bottom lands intervened, and a half hour's steady canter brought us to the great South Bend of Mouse River.

We camped at the summit of one of the bluffs overlooking the bend, protected on the south also by a steep ravine, down which a little stream, that was almost a torrent, tore its way to the more secret places in the valley, where we could sit and watch the deer and antelopes as they came to drink.

On Sunday two or three of us crossed the great plateau, ascended Hare Mountain, and from its cold, windy top saw, away to the south, the long blue line of Turtle Mountain, made known to us, beyond a doubt, by the two blue and rounded arches rising out of it. Pembina Mountain, the course of Mouse River, our first fording-place by the sloping plateau, our second crossing-place near the sand-hills, Moosehead Mountain, Prospect Hill, and the fainter blue of the Assiniboine hills were all visible within the circle of the horizon; while far to the south, but full in sight, arose the clear blue line of the long-desired Turtle Mountain, crowned with its double peaks.

The day ended in rain. Joseph and the Colonel had returned to camp, leaving me with my sketch-book, Dan Rice, and rifle. A huge drop on the paper-pad was the first warning that the storm threatened all day had really come. Galloping to a grove of oaks, I kept dry under the trees and waited some hours for the rain to hold up; but the end was not yet. It was obviously inconvenient to remain there all night, and so a couple of hours before sunset I mounted Dan and set off for the camp.

We had to cross two small streams, and Dan desired to be excused from jumping from bank to bank, and so we spent a drenching hour searching up and down the banks for a place where he could descend gradually to the water. This fairly accomplished, we soon came to the foot of the great bluff on the top of which the train was encamped. Along its foot ran another stream, wooded for a quarter of a mile on either bank, and fordable in but one or two places.

In spite of the flapping leaves, the bedraggling boughs, the stumps in the way, the swamps in which Dan twenty times was bogged and lost two shoes, and the discouraging process of breaking a way to three different but alike unfordable places in the stream, at last I made my own way on foot through the underbrush to the stream, first tying Dan outside the wood, and then, by wading down stream, at last found a place where the bank shelved sufficiently, and the trees were few enough, to permit a horse's approach and crossing; and from this spot finally found a road to Dan, trusting to Providence to be able to get from the stream through the woods on the other side and so to camp.

There the Colonel was asleep inside his covered wagon, with which he had supplied the place of our tent—the only dry place within five hundred miles—and the two half-breeds were huddling under the carts. Self-sacrificing Joseph was rolled up in a heap of blankets, over which he had pathetically stretched our mosquito-net, and there he sat smoking a pipe, watching the streams running through the top and down its sides, and discoursing to himself upon the mutability of all human affairs—especially tents. Joseph gave me the half of his blankets, only stipulating that I should strip till I came to a dry surface. We divided our last morsel, a cold buffalo-tongue, and then submitted to the rain for the rest of the day, all night, and the next morning till nearly noon, by which time we were cuddling up together under the portion of the blanket yet preserved from the rain, which was a piece in its centre about the size of a half-dollar.

When the sun came out overhead at noon, and the rain ceased enough for us to light a fire and fry pancakes, happier mortals were never seen, the storm having demonstrated in British America the same truth as the pain in Socrates's shin, in old Greece, just before he drank hemlock and began his immortality.

The next day we crossed another half-breed's trail from Fort Garry to White Horse Plains, and numberless buffalo trails besides. These are wide and deep single tracks worn by the hoofs of buffalo, which, when migrating in small herds, if undisturbed, and if not feeding, always travel in single file. The marsh grass, into which they had gone for water, was trodden down, the dung was fresh, the tracks recent, and the places numerous where they had torn away the grass with their hoofs and rolled in the dirt to dislodge the flies. The reddish purple arch of Turtle Mountain was visible to us through the summer haze all the afternoon, rising higher and higher, the trees upon its sides hourly becoming more distinct, resolving themselves first into clumps and groves, then into single trees. The next day we reached it.

Turtle Mountain is only a high range of hills, heavily timbered, with beautiful prairies here and there dotted with groves stretching away from it on every side. It takes its name, of course, from its peculiar outline as it rises up out of the prairie. Its general direction is north and south, with a deflection of the lower end, eastward, from 25° to 30°. After passing this lower end we had a better though distant view of its highest *butte*, the one whose blue crown we had seen from the top of Hare Mountain, overtopping all the surrounding range. This, our half-breeds told us, rises more perpendicularly from the prairie, and is difficult of ascent.

Riding along with Michelle the next morning, half a mile ahead of the train, we caught sight of two buffalo bulls quietly feeding on a green slope near a marsh a mile or two to the south-east. Our horses were tired with months of continuous travel, unfit to run, and, to tell the

truth, I always despaired of seeing Dan Rice equal his first exploit.

But our supply of meat was entirely exhausted, and of tallow too, which is to the prairie traveler butter, lard, and whatever else that is necessary in cooking and unctuous in nature. So as we came nearer the two buffalo I spurred ahead of old Michelle, taking the left-hand valleys, where my horse and I were hid from sight. Michelle waited the result just back of the brow of a hill.

Galloping on half a mile, I thought the valley between us not too wide for a long rifle shot, and dismounting, went to the summit of the hill. One of the bulls had lain down, his back turned toward me, and so no good shot was possible; and the other was just over the farther slope of the hill, kicking up his heels in the air, and crushing to pulp the flies that tormented him. There was no alternative but to ride to the next hill, a quarter of a mile beyond. For two or three minutes horse and rider were in full sight, if they had turned their heads to see; but they did not, and in an instant more we were hidden by the hill. Here I dismounted again, untied the lariat from the saddle-bow, leaving it to trail under the horse's feet that it might keep him in the valley, and then hastened to the top of the hill. The bulls were still there, the further one quietly feeding. A long marsh lay between us, empty of water except in the spring, but at all seasons full of long thick grass, breast high, and the whole oval fringed with a golden rim of helianthus—the flowers growing rarer as on the slope of the hills the color of the grass was changed to a lighter green; and here and there, in the circle, stood clumps of shrubbery like sentinels guarding the tombs of departed water-nymphs.

My weapon was the same Maynard rifle spoken of before, which a man may load and fire a dozen times in a minute if he be quick at taking aim, and not likely to be made nervous by excitement or danger. I put a half-dozen cartridges in my hand, and set the primer, which pays out tape caps as fast as the rifle is cocked, and began the approach. I might have fired at once upon the recumbent bull—the distance was not more than a hundred and fifty yards—but, except concealed, I could not hope to get the other bull, who would come to the top of the hill to reconnoitre, and, seeing me, perhaps get away without presenting a mark for a fatal shot. So crouching below the level of the tips of the grass, where it was high enough, or running stealthily from clump to clump of shrubbery large enough to keep head and shoulders out of sight, in a quarter of an hour I had got within twenty yards of the nearest bull—the one lying down—and was barely concealed behind a clump of decayed poplar shrubs. The other bull was hid behind the swell of the hill. The wind, I ought to have said, was blowing in a course at right angles to my approach, or one had never got so near; and had their strong odor come between the wind and my nostrils, I might have taken a longer

range. One instant devoted to a steady hand and to a synopsis of the chances of pursuit and the means of escape, and then I fired, aiming at his heart just back of the fore shoulder. Swift upon the crack of the rifle, hardly distinguishable from it save by a quick ear, came the spat which told that the bullet had hit the mark, and then, before the bull could rise to his feet, the red blood showed that it had hit a fatal spot. I dropped in the grass behind the bush instantly. The shot bull rose to his feet slowly and painfully, and looked in every direction but the right one to see where the blow had come from. Michelle the half-breed mounted, and now standing on the summit of the distant hill, drew his gaze for a moment, and then he turned to escape by way of the marsh I had crossed, and turning, saw me. Too weak to attack, he turned still again to escape from the nearest danger—slowly, deliberately, and with evident pain—too much hurt to run. As he turned I took a quick aim, fired, and hit him just over the kidneys, in the hope of breaking his back. The monster stopped, shook his shaggy mane, that hung, black and curling, from his jaw to his knees, walked on a few steps, and could go no further. His vast bulk heaved with the tremors of approaching death; but I could watch him no longer while uncertain what the bull just over the hill might be doing. Hastening up the slope, I caught sight of him standing and, apparently, gazing at the distress of his companion. He had not taken to flight; for it is a peculiarity of this sagacious animal that, till they know from what quarter danger comes, they will not run, but only huddle together, when in herds, perhaps the bulls circling about the cows and calves, and two or three of the older and larger bulls going to some elevated point to discover the direction of danger. When only two or three are together, or when a single bull is fired upon from a concealed position, they will hardly move a dozen yards till they know in which direction it is safest to run. As this bull stood there, partly turned from me, hump, horns, and part of the shoulders visible, and ears and head erect, I fired, aiming as low on his side as possible, yet clearing the top of the hill. Spat!—came back the sound of the bullet as it hit the creature's side, quicker than the echo of the rifle from the nearest hills, and then the huge "ugh" as it tore its way through his muscles and lungs. I loaded instantly, and, doing so, caught a second's glimpse of the first bull down on his knees and just turning over. As if to revenge the fall of his companion, or by some quick instinct, the second one galloped toward the top of the hill—not thirty yards from me—swept his lion-like head around to the spot where I stood—for concealment was no longer possible—gazed an instant with his large, dark, ox-like eyes, flashing fire now, and then rushed headlong down the slope, horns low, full upon me. The quick rifle saved my life. Before he had made a dozen leaps, or was within a dozen yards of me, it sent a bullet straight between his



GOLGOTHA.

eyes into the huge mat of black and curling hair that covered his skull. The bullet would have leaped a thousand yards of empty air quicker than a leaf falls; but as for killing him, it might as well have struck a rock. It staggered him though, and, as I say, saved my life; for I could not have loaded again before he would have had me on his horns, do the best I might. He turned in his course, as if a little dizzy, and not certain of his sight; rushed by with leaps that shook the ground—not a yard from my side—but soon stopped, breathing hard. The first shot was beginning to take effect. He walked slowly away as I loaded, sometimes galloping a few yards, and then staggering into a walk. Obeying the law of parsimony, I would not fire another shot, expecting every moment to see him drop, but followed on slowly behind. As I reached the top of a hill that had hid him a moment from my sight, I saw that he was renewing his speed, and was already two hundred yards away, and might travel a mile or two yet away from the trail of the train, for such huge creatures as these take a great deal of killing. He turned to look for his pursuer, and thus gave me a good mark. I fired. Bang! spat!—that same peculiar sound; and for the first time the great frame tottered nearly to its fall. A few steps on, and then he could walk no further—barely stand. As I approached he wheeled in his tracks, and turned his great shaggy head and its glaring eyes upon me, widening his feet to keep his stand. Then his hinder legs gave way, almost letting him fall; but with convulsive struggles, which seemed to wrinkle the thick skin over his back and loins as easily as if it had been silk, he rose erect again, still with his head up, gazing. Almost suddenly then he gathered his legs under him and lay down quietly, breathing hard and loud, in short, heavy pants. Once more he rose to his feet, staggered a few slow steps toward me, then shuddered with his vast bulk from head to tail, dropped on

his knees, and failing to balance himself there, fell heavily over upon his side, breathed a few more great gasps, pawed the air, and then was still. Last of all, he stretched out his throat on the long prairie grass, dyed with his blood, and gently gave away his final breath.

Before I reached the spot where the first bull fell, the train had come up, and Michelle, with a dexterity acquired by more than thirty years' practice, had taken off the skin, and was cutting out the bos or hump, which, next to the tongue, is the choicest bit for eating. In less than an hour both were carved—rib pieces and humps and shoulder-pieces, we supplied with fresh meat for a week and jerked meat for a fortnight—and the train was moving on.

That night, after supper, as we gathered around the camp-fires, and while the red light was fading out of the clouds high in the sky, and the purple passing down beyond the level horizon, old Michelle entertained us with such stories of his adventurous life—of his buffalo hunts on snow-shoes—of his chases after herds of thousands—the goring and tossing and trampling, bursting guns and broken limbs—such stories as, if put on paper, would make all the exploits of amateurs seem as tame and safe as crossing the main street of a country village.

The next day we crossed the great trails from Fort Garry to Turtle Mountain, and passed a large encampment ground near a running stream, which had the same general appearance as the one by the sand-hills on Mouse River. The buffalo trails were very numerous, and crossed our path in every direction, converging to and diverging from the ravines, coulees, and marshes, where they had sought water. The place for miles and miles, in every direction, was one huge Golgotha. The bleaching bones and skulls of buffaloes, slain in former years by the hunters, whitened the green grass on every acre, almost on every rood of ground; and the fresher carcasses of those killed during the year's hunt were scattered over

the ground, and tainted the air in every direction. We could almost follow the track of the hunters in their chase, where the fight had been thickest, and hundreds covered a single acre or two; and where some sturdier bull had kept up a longer flight, and finally, in an agony of thirst, had fallen and died in the middle of a marsh. The grass was of a greener green, and the flowers had a livelier hue which had been watered with their blood. The rank verdure made a striking frame for the great black-haired skulls, or the heavy arching rib-bones, now bleached to whiteness, or perchance covered with shreds of flesh which the crows and hawks and foxes and wolves had not quite devoured. As the train passed on through this sickening place the crows and hawks rose from their carrion feast, and hovered in the air, shrieking and cawing, till we had passed; and the gaunt gray wolves, scared away by our approach, ran off over the prairie in long, lithe flexile leaps, now and then pausing in the thickest grass, and turning to watch us, licking their chops until we again came nearer, and then leaping away to hide in the long rushes of some distant marsh. All night we could hear their long, melancholy howlings, and, as if not satisfied with their filthy feast by day, they lurked about the camp, frightening the horses into a stampede, and not unfrequently chewing up their hide lariats within a dozen feet of their heads.

Our journey from Turtle Mountain to Devil's Lake was accomplished within a few days. Buffalo chases were an everyday occurrence with us, and game of every feathered kind was equally abundant. One Saturday afternoon we brought up in a "pocket" near the Lac de Gros Butte, where we were protected on two sides by water, and on one side by an impassable marsh, in which, at every few moments, we could hear the whirr of ducks alighting or rising. A narrow neck of land was the only point at which the In-

dians could have got at us. The shores of the lake, which takes its name from a high hill near by, were strewn with the carcasses of dead buffalo, with huge wolf-tracks on the sand all about them, who had either been severely wounded by the half-breeds, and had escaped to the water to drink, or, having been pursued, had attempted to swim across the lake and perished. Here we had wood to build our fires for the first time since leaving Turtle Mountain. Instead of it, we had had to split up the least necessary parts of our carts for kindling wood, and cook our pancakes over red-hot *bois de vache*.

The next day was a rainy one; but the rain did not prevent us from taking a horseback ride to Devil's Lake. It was through much tribulation that we succeeded even in getting to so ill-named a place as Miniwakan. We had to ford half a dozen streams, swimming two or three of them, wade through marshes, and in crossing one stream whose banks were difficult of ascent or descent, we went around into the lake where it emptied, outside of its mouth, and had to travel by compass (having laid our direction) for nearly half a mile through water deep as the horse's shoulders, and where the tall rank rushes rose from six to ten feet higher still, shutting out the view of every thing but the sky, which looked in our environment as if we were beholding it from a well. Truth nor our primitive intuitions could have hardly served us as well as the compass did; for we struck the narrow promontory, for which we had been steering so blindly, at its only accessible point. At every step we started up crowds of blue herons, cranes, gulls, snipe, ducks, geese, and sheitpokes.

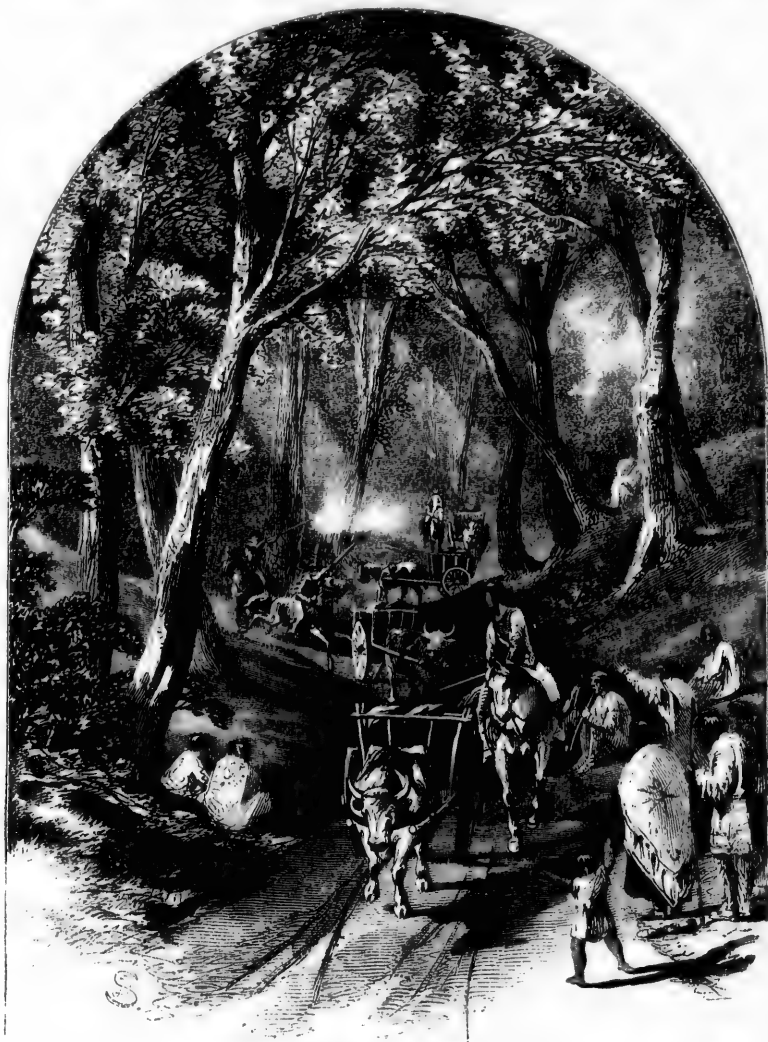
The rain fell continuously all the afternoon, and we could not see the opposite shores of Devil's Lake, which are doubtless visible at some points in clear weather. We could, however, now and then get a faint glimpse of the timber on a point of land, shaped like a spoon, it is



DEVIL'S LAKE.

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RETURN OF THE HUNTERS.

said, with the bowl end pointing out into the lake, where the half-breeds and Indians slaughter hundreds yearly. They surround them in large companies, just as the elephants are trapped in Ceylon, or as the buffaloes themselves are caught in timber-traps in some parts of the Saskatchewan district; and by careful and not too rapid chasing large herds are at last forced to enter over this neck of land, where the water shuts them in on every side, and mounted horsemen are behind them who may then shoot them down at their leisure.

The Devil's Lake region is a favorite camp-

ing-ground of the Sioux, and therefore is most shunned by the half-breeds, except when they go in large and powerful companies. The great brigades of course hunt them with impunity; and we came upon their tracks, their camping-grounds, miles of burned prairie or of Golgothas, their trails, and the heaps of bones, broken, and the marrow dug out, which told where they had been making pemmican, every day almost from Turtle Mountain to Devil's Lake and Pembina. Beyond this point, therefore, across, southwest, to the mouth of the Sheyenne on Red River, or further into the Sioux country, Michelle, thought-

ful of the husband of his wife, and the father of his babies waiting for him at St. Jo, refused to go.

So the explorer was unable to learn if the hypothenuse of the triangle from Upper Red River to the south bend of the Saskatchewan was as much better and briefer for travelers as it is for mathematicians.

From the Lac de Gros Butte, therefore, we, all together, took the straight Devil's Lake and St. Jo trail. My journal of the date says: "We have ended now our travel without trails, and soon trails will be roads, and roads railroads, to carry us Eastward Ho!"

The last day of August, late in the afternoon, we came to the brow of Pembina Mount or plateau, from which we could overlook St. Jo, five miles away. We were still 500 miles from the outposts of American civilization; but we greeted the log-houses of the half-breeds with as much enthusiasm as we could possibly have done the dorae of the New York City Hall with the figure of Justice surmounting it. The trail was worn deep; the trees on the plateau, and down its side, were large and thickly leafed, and nothing could have added to the beauty of sunset, which cast such long shadows down the side of the hill and over the prairie, except, perhaps, the sight of a train of half-breeds returning from the summer hunts, with loaded carts creaking heavily along the winding road, down the mountain side, the men in their bright colors, and their horses gayly caparisoned—home in sight, the last camping-ground passed.

Some such sight as this we saw a little after sunrise the next day. While at breakfast we heard, near by in a ravine of the thick woods

which surrounded us on every side, Sioux war-songs. Michelle and Joe, fearful that a war-party of the rascals was on our track, hurried to the horses, unpicketed and harnessed them, loaded the carts, and all of us were in the saddle and pushing on briskly to St. Jo in less than five minutes. It was a false alarm, however. We heard nothing farther from them as we galloped on through the majestic woods which covered the slope of the mount and skirted the Pembina River on either side. We slackened our pace after putting the river between us, and entering St. Jo, drove to Kittson's Post. We had hardly got inside of the stockades, shaken hands with every man in the town, answered interrogatories propounded in French, Chippewa, Cree, and Nistoneaux, before we heard a volley of musketry in the woods, rapidly succeeded by another and another, and mingled with shouts and halloos that could come from none but semi-civilized throats.

The party soon emerged from the woods; the very carts dragged along at a lively trot, swift riders galloping ahead, some of them with huge white buffalo skins trailing from their shoulders, like the vestments of a priest at high mass, and painted with savage devices and in gaudy colors; others in the blanket and leggins of Sioux braves, tricked out with painted quills or brilliant wampum; others still in the half-breed dress, woolens, with handsome bead decorations, skin caps—a motley crowd, headed by Battiste Wilkie, the President of the Councilors of St. Jo. It was a deputation of half-breed coming from a grand treaty-making with the Sioux at Devil's Lake.

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TO RED RIVER AND BEYOND.

[Chief Paper.]

ONE Tuesday morning we began our journey from Pembina to the Selkirk settlement.

Joe Rolette, our host, with his two little boys whom he was taking to the Catholic school at the settlement after the summer vacation; Mr. Bottineau, a French half-breed, whose excellent farm between St. Joseph and Pembina I have mentioned in another place; Joseph, and myself were of the party. Joe Rolette rode in a miniature Red River cart with his youngest boy—a miniature of himself—behind a diminutive mule rejoicing in the title of Thomas Jefferson, and with a genuine patriotism responding by an accelerated gait to the exclamation of his abbreviated Christian name—"Tom!" Tom was a mule in miniature, saving only his ears, and held together in his little and tight fitting skin all the virtues and none of the vices of the race of which he was the minimum. The cart which he drew was loaded with

all the blankets of the party, the cooking utensils, pemmican, bread, and other provisions, and the passengers mentioned; but he drew it along at a lively trot from sunrise to sunset, forty-four miles a day, with the vigor and continuity of the balance-wheel of a chronometer, and tired out even the first-rate horses which the rest of us rode.

A few words will describe the appearance of the country between Pembina and Fort Garry. In all external aspects, to one who travels by the river road, it is the same from Fort Abercrombie to within a few miles of Lake Winnipeg. The direction of the road is very nearly north. It is the continuous chord to which the river, in its winding course, supplies a hundred greater or lesser arcs. The banks of the river are thickly wooded with elm, oak, and poplar, and this wall of trees is at the traveler's right throughout the journey, always bounding the eastern horizon. This general prospect is varied



JEAN BATTISTE WILKIE.

President of the Councilors of St. Joseph, in Sioux warrior's dress.—See *Magazine*, October, 1880.

by lines of timber stretching away to the west, and marking the course of the tributaries of Red River.

About the middle of the forenoon, near one of these tributary streams, we came in view of a shanty, inhabited by an old Scotchman and his wife—she the first white woman in the Selkirk settlement. We were treated to bowls of fresh milk, with the cream standing thick upon it, and making a man blush to remember that he came from a city where stump-tailed abominations and watery-blue dilutions had long since led him to forget the appearance of the genuine lacteal fluid.

The shanty was not neat nor well furnished. The bed, which stood in one corner, was small and narrow, the walls had never been white-washed, nor the mud floor boarded over, though the cooking-stove and table, which also occupied this their only apartment, left little of the floor to be seen or trodden upon.

An hour after sunset we came to the spot where we were to pass the night. It was one always used by the plain hunters, and marked by heaps of ashes, charred stumps, and well-worn paths leading down to the water's edge. An old man and his wife had come to the camp-ground before us, and were camping half-way down the bank, to be sheltered from the cold wind which was blowing over the prairie. As we led our horses down to the water, we could see their faces by the camp-fire, both wrinkled and seamed with old age, and his white hairs and stooping figure indicating that he had passed the threescore and ten, beyond which all is labor and trouble. He was sitting on the ground in the lee of a large log, smoking a short pipe, while the woman was blowing the embers of their fire to get a coal to put in her own. They had evidently had their scanty supper of tea and pemmican, and had spread their single pair of blankets in preparation for the night. Our host knew them, and when we had made our own huge fire on the prairie—of logs too large for them to lift—and were eating supper by its cheerful blaze, he told us their story.

It was the pitiful story of another Lear. The old man had been strong and vigorous, and well to do in his prime, famous as a breaker of horses, and had gathered together a little property, enough, if well husbanded, to keep him and his wife from poverty. All this, when he began to feel the infirmities of age, he had given to an adopted son, asking in return only the food and shelter necessary for his few remaining years. For a short time he was well cared for; but when this faithless wretch had it all securely in his hands, and he became accustomed to its possession, he set the old pair adrift, and now is laying up ill-gotten wealth, and counts his cattle on Sun days, and thanks God he is not poor as other men are, and goes to sleep comfortably housed, while the cold wind and rain drench the white hairs of the old man and woman who had called him son.

We were up and off long before sunrise (but the old man and his wife had started before us), and rode fifteen miles briskly before breakfast, meeting several Red River trains, which had made an early start on their way to St. Paul or the plains. We stopped for breakfast at the house of Mr. John Dace, which marks the beginning of the more thickly inhabited part of the Red River settlement—from this point stretching down to the vicinity of Lake Winnipeg, clustering most thickly in the vicinity of Fort Garry, sixteen miles below.

At Mr. Dace's house every thing was in strong contrast with the house at which we had lunched on the previous morning. Neatness and thrift were obvious at a glance. The men were out in the fields gathering in the harvest, and the warm sunshine of an autumn morning was lying on the clean plank floor, as it loves to lie where there is stillness, and it can make cool shadows. The morning's work had long been completed, the floor scrubbed, every thing set to rights, and the

baby sent to sleep in a swinging hammock, made of long cord and a shawl, by the time we came. In the adjoining apartment we could hear the low talk of women. The wife of Mr. Dace, a half-breed woman inclined to corpulence, soon came in, and learned our wishes; and while breakfast was preparing for us in the next room we had time to look round us. The room was a spacious one for a block-house, and one of the heavy beams which ran under the ceiling was supported by a stout post, against which the baby's hammock swung, giving him a slight jerk, which, to a metropolitan baby, for instance, would have been any thing but sleep-provoking. A double bed, on which I could see plenty of good blankets, but no white sheets, stood in one corner, and two or three old oak trunks served for seats on one side of the room. The chairs were of the same substantial home-made manufacture, and one or two had bottoms of hide, like those of snow-shoes. The table was an old-fashioned one, the leaves supported by swinging legs. The walls were neatly white-washed, and where the plastering had been rubbed the invariable neatness of the apartment was preserved, though at the expense of mortar. The windows were small, and the door low—the doors being accommodated to the size of the windows, perhaps, and the sashes to the size and costliness of the little six by eight panes which, when the house was built, were worth 1s. 6d. sterling. Through the open door we could catch a glimpse of the waters of the river, red where the sun shone upon them through the trees, from behind us. Pigeons and wild geese, with potatoes and turnips unsurpassable any where; bread and butter, cheese and tea, white sugar and cream were set before us. Mr. Dace was too far back in the fields on the prairie to be called; but as we drove on we noted the luxuriant growth of the vegetables in his garden, and the thickness of the sheaves in his wheat field.

Delayed by Joe's horse-racing and a drunken ferryman, above the settlement, we did not come in sight of the spires of the *Cathédrale de Saint Boniface* till near sunset. At last they appeared—two bright lines rising above the last grove of poplar trees through which we had to pass, standing out clear and glistening against the deep blue of the sky, and surmounted by the cross. A little farther on we left the woods behind us, and came in full view of the heart of the Red River settlement—the very spot where, half a century ago, the Earl of Selkirk planted his colony. Close at our left was another field of wheat, half of it harvested, and each pile of yellow sheaves sending its long eastward shadow over the closely shaven plain. Near at hand two half-breeds were loading a cart, and where the standing wheat began, a group of reapers were busy at work with sickle and scythe, women following behind, raking and binding, and adding to the golden tents upon the field at one end as fast as they were taken away at the other. The red sashes which most of the men were sup-

October, 1880.

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CATHEDRAL OF ST. BONIFACE.

plied the only lacking color in the landscape. Beyond them, to the west, flowed the winding blue line of the river, topped by the dark brown of its farther bank, left in shade by the setting sun. A mile beyond, on its western bank, just where the shaded blue waters of the Red River were augmented by the gleaming silver of the Assiniboine, on which as it flowed from the west the sun still shone brightly, stood the massive quadrangle of Fort Garry, with its four cone-topped bastions; and directly ahead of us, on one side of the river and close to its banks, a few rods further on, whither all the waters of the two rivers seemed to sway and flow, arose the high walls of the Cathedral of Saint Boniface, surmounted by the two glistening spires which had greeted us at a distance.

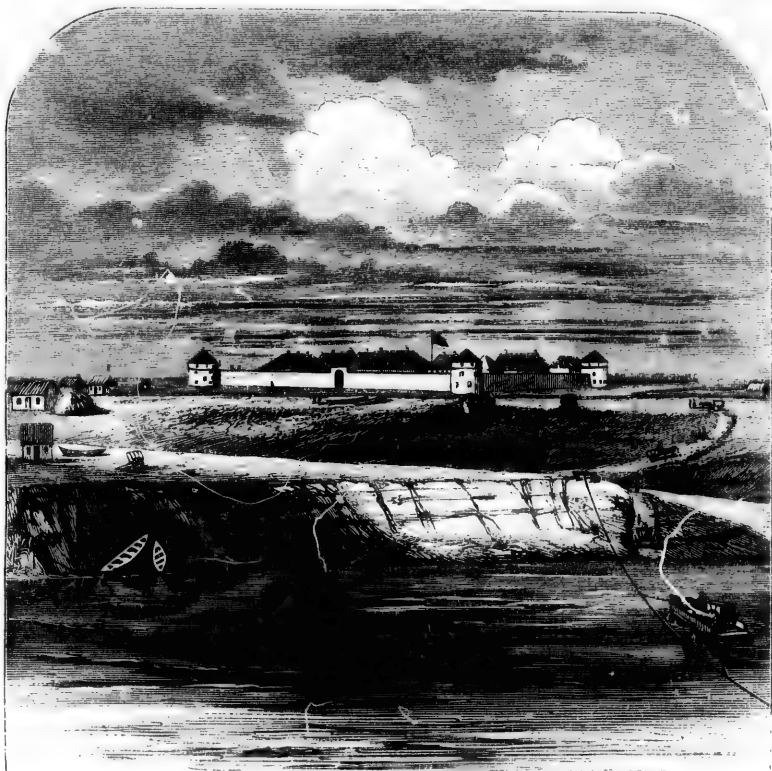
Fort Garry is a very fine structure. The exterior wall is of limestone, quarried on the river bank near by. At the four corners are four imposing bastions. Of the thickly-crowded houses within, one or two may be of the same material, limestone, but most are of wood, including the Company's officers' quarters, and those of the officers of the Royal Canadian Rifles, a company of which is stationed here, whose rations are supplied by the Hudson's Bay Company. As you enter the spacious quadrangle by the arched gate-way, which opens to the south close to the bank of the Assiniboine, the impression is the usual one at sight of soldiers' barracks; but passing to the building at the northern end of the square, and by the soldiers and servants who are straggling about, this impression vanishes as you come in view of the spacious edifice in which Chief Factor M'Tavish, who is also Governor M'Tavish, of the colony of Assiniboia, resides.

We were treated with great courtesy by the Governor during our stay in the settlement, and the innumerable questions which the current of conversation and recent events led us to ask, were responded to with an unfailing freedom and

sincerity. In some of the Canadian commissioners' reports the reticence and the misrepresentations of the Company's officers are dwelt upon, but in this quarter, at least—and it is the highest in the settlement—we found neither. Governor M'Tavish is a gentleman of Scotch birth or descent, as his name and appearance indicate. His figure is tall, and his head finely shaped, with a broad, high brow, which, without particularly jutting eyebrows, gives you the impression of mental calibre. The wrinkles upon his forehead and face are such as care, not age, accounts for, and are set-off by the Palmerston style of whisker and a heavy mustache, together with long sandy hair, in which the streaks of gray are only beginning to appear. His manners had the quiet, well-bred tone oftener found among Englishmen than others, and his voice is low from the same cause or from some bronchial affection. Energy, determination, and executive ability were the obvious characteristics of the man. What we had before learned of his culture and tastes was confirmed by the books which we saw lying on the table and book-cases.

At many of the posts of the Company the year's business is done up in a few weeks, and till the same season rolls around again there is an absence of all employment, and a closing out of all news, such as affords the common food of thought to most persons linked by daily or weekly newspapers to the rest of the world. Some of the Company's officers are wise enough to improve these long intervals of leisure, taking care to supply themselves with books, which do not perish with the single using. The Governor was long stationed at York Factory, where all the business of the year is crowded into the brief two months in which the ships of supply from England, and the boats from the interior posts with furs, arrived and departed, and there or elsewhere made himself a learned man.

In regard to the settlement of the northwestern



FORT GARRY.

areas, it may be well here to observe that, inasmuch as timber occurs mainly on the banks of rivers, their population will be greatly retarded or increased by the knowledge of the existence of other kinds of fuel at accessible points. We had been repeatedly informed by half-breeds of the existence of coal or lignite in strata in the banks of Mouse River and the Saskatchewan. Governor M^cTavish showed us pieces of lignite from that river—the first that we had seen—and confirmed the fact of its existence on the upper waters of Mouse River. He added, that it was used habitually during the winter at Fort Pitt; and a retired chief factor, whom we afterward visited, told us that at his former station, at the Carlton House, it had supplied their blacksmith's forge. The important bearing of this fact upon the future population of the northwestern country is apparent. There is considerable pine timber upon the great streams of this northern river system; and if trees were planted with pains by all new settlers, a sufficient supply for ordinary purposes might be kept up. But it is to be taken into the account, that in these high latitudes the winter season is of longer duration than in the equally fertile and likewise timber-

prairie districts of our own Northwestern States. As the need shall arise these mines of coal will, therefore, be worked, and will supply the fuel of millions for a thousand years. Such difficulties as are now had in burning it will not be experienced when coal stoves supply the place of the open hearth.

I suppose that Norman W. Kittson is the man who has done as much as any one to break up their happy solitude. As long ago as 1844 he was guilty of forging the first link which connected the Mississippi and the Red River of the North. As always, trade was the occasion of the enterprise. His store, which was formerly at Pembina, on our side of the international line, tapped the rich fur trade, in which, north of the line, the Hudson's Bay Company had a monopoly, and perhaps he now and then purchased from hunters north of the line skins to balance those which the Company's men gathered south of it. Now the license of exclusive trade has expired, and Mr. Kittson is allowed an open rivalry in the settlement itself. His store stands on the east bank of the Red River, opposite the mouth of the Assiniboine. He and other enterprising traders, during the year 1857, sent through

St. Paul houses, for exportation below, more than \$120,000 worth of furs. Moreover, traders and private parties are sending money as well as furs to St. Paul, for supplies. Formerly they had to rely on the favor of the Hudson's Bay Company, and undergo the delay, and share the expense of the long trip of the ships from York Factory to England and back. Now the round trip can be made, by way of St. Paul and New York, in thirty to forty days, and in the year mentioned as much money's worth of money as of furs was left by these people in St. Paul—\$120,000.

A day or two after our visit to Fort Garry, Joseph and I hired two saddle-horses, for a trip to the lower stone fort, properly called Lower Fort Garry. We had crossed the river at this point before in a canoe, but the difficulty experienced in getting our horses over the two rivers—Red River and the Assiniboine—gave us a realizing sense of the nature of the ferry and ferryman, and new facts for generalization as to the character of the Red River half-breeds. I believe the person who leases the ferry-boat pays £20 a year for the privilege, and charges three-pence for a passage; but the ferry-boy, according to our observation, spends a portion of his time dodging the demands on his paddles and his patience. The bank of the river is of stratified clay, which in rainy weather is exceedingly slippery, and accumulates in tremendous quantities about the feet; and there is nothing to prevent horse, cart, or man from slipping from the top of the bank into the river, except a log or two where the boat lands. It has never entered into the mind of the owner of the ferry, I presume, to save himself the delay of carts in getting down the bank carefully, by building a plank walk with cleets from its top down to low-water mark. The ferry-boat is a flat boat twice as long as broad, and tacked to a cable which is stretched from shore to shore. The rope which connects the forward end of the boat with the cable being shortened, the side of the boat is swung around so that the current helps to shove it over. The same steep and muddy bank is at the west side of the river; also on the south side of the Assiniboine—the same lazy ferry over it, and the same unplanked bank on its north side. Moreover, there is no boat running straight across the Red River below the Assiniboine. To cross from the east side of the Red River to the side below the Assiniboine, where Fort Garry stands, one must needs cross both rivers in this tedious way, subject to the mercy of the mud if it rains, of the ferryman if he is lazy, and of the two rivers in any case. We were an hour and a half in getting to the fort with our horses, in spite of working our passage by hauling at the ropes. If things work as they will work, my opinion is that that ferryman will go to his grave haunted by visions of a planked bank down to the Styx, and Charon as a driving Yankee running a two-horse ferry-boat across the damned river; and it is not impossible that, on stormy nights, the good Doctor, who resides at the fort near at hand, may be waked from his virtuous slumbers by the shout

of some future bold captain calling on his men, through the wind and rain, to take a reef in the stove-pipe, or to whip up the night horse.

But we were over at last, and spurring our horses, galloped on down the river. A few sketches made on our return journey will give the reader an idea of the appearance of the views at two or three of the principal points between the two forts. But it must be left to his imagination to picture the immense fields of wheat which we found, some on the right of us going to the houses, which continuously skirt the river, and others to the left of us extended over the prairie almost as far as the eye could reach. As along the bank on the other side of the river, above Fort Garry, so on this side of the bank below it, the straight road led us through poplar forests and shrubbery, through which, at every bend of the river, we could catch glimpses of the fields of wheat, or barley, or potatoes, or oats—the neat white homes of the settlers rising at frequent intervals, surrounded by their well-hatched outbuildings, and hay or wheat stacks—these daily growing more numerous, for our journey was made in the very middle of harvest time, and part of it in the light of the harvest moon.

Often the dwelling of some retired Hudson's Bay Company officer might be seen on a commanding point, distinguished by its superior size and height from the buildings around it. Here numbers of the old factors or traders of the Company are contented to return and spend the rest of their days, among the scenes and under a jurisdiction familiar and agreeable to them, relying for news of the entire world upon their monthly files of the English newspapers for supplies of the necessities of life upon the half-breed farmers and hunters around them, and of its luxuries upon their annual importations from England, or, in latter years, the States.

Spires of churches, and the long arms of wind-mills, broke the level lines of the pictures that greeted our eyes as the road led us on from open place to open place, through the poplars that surrounded it for a portion of the way. Wind-mills grind the wheat for all the settlers. There is one steam-mill, with two run of stones and a set of saws. It was not grinding or sawing when we passed; but in its shadow two men were laboriously dragging at either end of a heavy rip saw, though the circular was in perfect order. Whose fault this is I can not guess, but it is clear that in an American settlement the settlers would not suffer it to be any one's fault.

In like manner the road, which had been begun to be mended in several places, was left half finished, its last state worse than its first. In dry weather, however, it is as level as a floor. There is a bridle-path close on the banks of the river, but no road.

Our own horses we had left at Pembina, to get fat for the home journey, and the horses which we hired for this trip might have been buffalo runners in their day, but their days must have been in Lord Selkirk's time. It was dark before we had got half-way to the lower fort. We drew



RESIDENCE OF J. H. HARRIOTT, ESQ.

bridle, therefore, at the residence of Mr. J. H. Harriott, a retired chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, to whom we had letters, and whose residence was a mile nearer than the lower fort, where we had at first intended to pass the night.

A true gentleman of the old school—that we were within the walls of his house was sufficient reason why he should treat us like princes. Though, to tell the truth, we did not even have the honor of resembling princes *incognito*. One summer's journey on the prairies had reduced us almost to extremities in the matter of clothing. We wore borrowed "biled shirts," mine covered with a borrowed coat once and a half too large, and Joseph's covered with a coat, his own, so ragged that that had to be concealed by an overcoat just a little better. As for our trowsers, "the least said the soonest mended;" and they would have stood but little mending more. With hair uncut and beards untrimmed, sun-burned, and looking more like foot-pads than gentlemen, we had ventured upon this journey with a degree of confidence in the natural agreeableness of our countenances and amenity of our manners—that they would interpret us aright—such as, under better clothes, we should never have dared to indulge. As we rode along in the twilight, we had amused ourselves by assuming to be what we must have seemed—Dick Turpins, Jack Shepherds, patent-safe men—but before riding into Mr. Harriott's gate recovered our dignity as possible princes.

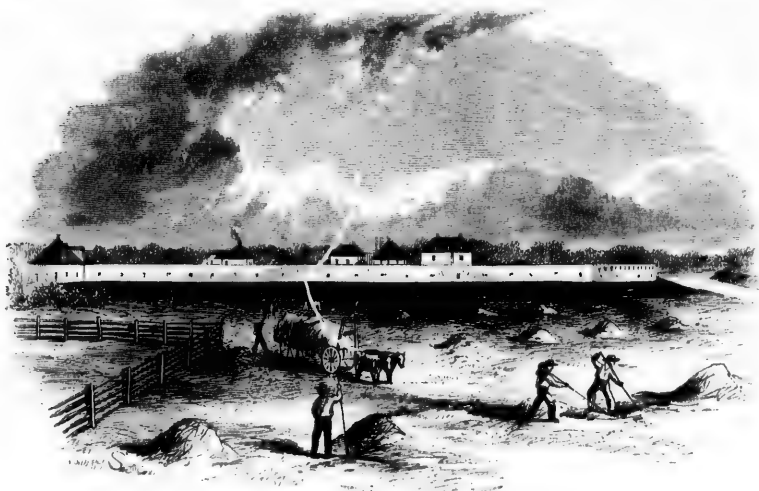
None of our suspicions seemed to have entered the minds of our host and hostess. While we remained under their roof—a period protracted at their own request—we were the recipients of a bountiful hospitality.

From numerous long and interesting conversations with our host, we obtained many partic-

ulars regarding the management and practical working of the Company's operations, and especially regarding the geography of the Saskatchewan district and the district lying between its waters and those of the Missouri and of the Rocky Mountains, from the Kootonais pass northward. In the various capacities of clerk, chief trader, and chief factor, Mr. Harriott had traveled over or resided in many places in this vast territory. Now establishing a trading-post at the foot of the Rocky Mountains; now in charge of the Carlton House or of Fort Pitt, on the head-waters of the Saskatchewan; and, again, leading parties, with a rich freight of furs, through a dangerous Indian country; and there, or elsewhere, having such hair-breadth escapes, and such exciting adventures, undergoing such risks, and hardships, and exposure, as would make one thrill to hear, though never to be heard from his lips except by solicitation, which added the charm of unconscious modesty to what was already sufficiently brave and admirable.

A view of Mr. Harriott's residence is given above, and may be taken as a type of the better class of dwellings in the Selkirk settlement. It is built of limestone, quarried from the native rock, and within and without was planned by its owner. One fact reveals some of the causes of the stagnation of things at Red River. Mr. H., when building his house, left in the spacious dining-room an arching alcove for a side-board, at the same time giving a cabinet-maker at the settlement an order to fill it. Several years have elapsed, but what with the cabinet-maker hunting, and farming, and doing nothing, Mr. H. has not yet seen even the wood of which his side-board is to be made.

A few well-selected books, house-plants in the windows, choice engravings on the wall, riding



LOWER FORT GARRY.

whips and guns in the hall, tobacco jar and pipes on the side-table, a melodeon and accordeon and music-box in the room which New Englanders call a parlor, tell the story of how the pleasant summer days and long winter nights are whiled away, and how a life of exposure and adventure and toil is rounded with rest and calm and domestic peace.

One pleasant afternoon our host ordered his carriage to the door and drove us to the "Stone Fort." The horses were a gay pair, and whirled their load down the graveled walk and over the bridge and along the road at a pace that needed a strong hand on the reins. The carryall was of a soberer sort, imported from England by way of Hudson's Bay and York Factory, and of a pattern not new in fashion here or there—low, heavy wheels, thick, substantial whiffle-trees, high dash-board, and a body like that of the carriages of well-to-do English squires half a century ago. We were soon at the fort. The view here given was taken from the south—the direction in which we came. The fort is built of solid limestone, as are many of the buildings inclosed, and is, perhaps, the most imposing of the Company's structures. It was erected at the advice of Sir George Simpson, but has never been of the use which was anticipated for it. Its capacious buildings serve mainly for the storage of furs and provisions, and the large crops which are gathered from the farm. A distillery near by, where the Company once undertook to manufacture their liquor, is no longer used for that purpose. When Assiniboia is made a colony, the fort may be bought for government offices.

One Sunday morning I had the pleasure of accompanying my host and his wife to the church of St. Andrews, of which Archdeacon Hunter is in charge. The church was well filled: the congregation a well-dressed one—not differing

greatly, I think, from one which might be seen in any country village in England, since it consisted, in the bulk, neither of French half-breeds, who are almost always Catholics, nor of Scotch, who worship at the kirk, but mainly of the English and their descendants: together with a few half-breeds here and there, Company's servants and officers, a retired chief trader and factor or two, and on the walls the tablet of one who had lately died.

The sketch below of the church edifice, in which Archdeacon Hunter officiates, may give a faint idea of its appearance and situation. It is, perhaps, the neatest building in Red River. Constructed of limestone, from the quarries near at hand, the stone has been dressed and piled with more regard to architectural rules than any other. A wall of the same kind of stone surrounds the church and the grave-yard in its rear. Its position upon the banks of the river is a very fine one. Standing upon its porch one may look up or down the river and see the neat homes and farms of the settlers, while its tasty outlines form a prominent object in the landscape to those gazing upon it from either direction.

Dining with Thomas Sinclair, a gentleman long resident at Red River, I learned that the *Anson Northup* was not the first boat, though doubtless the first steamboat on the Red River of the North. In the back-ground of the sketch of Bishop Anderson's church, there is to be seen the roof of a steam mill—the only one on Red River. The machinery of this mill, which grinds wheat and saws logs indiscriminately, Mr. Sinclair was commissioned to transport from St. Paul to Fort Garry. The perils of the land transit may be faintly appreciated by one who has read of what we suffered in our less difficult undertaking. Probably it would have

been still more difficult to carry such heavy loads by the plains. This he did not attempt to do, but camped at Graham's Point, two miles above Fort Abercrombie, and there made a rude boat or batteau. Noah's ark could not have served its maker's purpose better. Mr. Sinclair's boat was 55 feet long, and 13 feet wide. Unlike Noah, Mr. Sinclair had no oakum, pitch, or tar wherewith to calk the seams. This seemed to balk his hopes, but the difficulty was overcome by using basswood and grooving the planks. They were so green and damp that water ran ahead of the planer. But not a drop ran into the boat when they were put together, and the cargo—all the machinery of an engine twenty-horse power, was landed at the settlement in safety. Unless the name of the Indian who first dipped a paddle there can be ascertained let this pass as the first navigation of Red River.

James Sinclair, the brother of the gentleman just mentioned, has been likely to lose something

of his proper fame. It is claimed, apparently on good authority, that he first discovered the pass through the Rocky Mountains, now named after Captain Palissier, and went through it

three several times; first, in 1841 with two families of emigrants; second, in 1848 with seven men going to California; and in 1854 with his own family, and a number of cattle, his intention being to start a stock farm in Oregon. In one of his journeys, perhaps the last, the party which he led were compelled to leave their carts by the roadside on this side of the mountains, and pack their stuff through. These carts were seen by some of Captain Palissier's men, and indeed used



ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH.



THE KING.

to boil their tea with, and must have signified to one who saw them that the pass had been discovered and used.

Returning toward Fort Garry we passed the kirk, which is the place of worship of the old Scotch settlers. It was our good fortune to spend the night at the house of one of the most intelligent of these, Mr. Donald Murray, of Frog Plain. He had been personally familiar with the progress of the settlement from Lord Selkirk's time till now, and entertained us till long past midnight with his reminiscences. The Scotch settlers, who occupy with the English the portion of the settlement around Fort Garry, are mostly farmers. They may send hunters to the plains or pay for their outfit, but themselves rarely go, except for pleasure. They are by far the most sober and industrious class of the community, and have been the salt which has saved it till now. They abide in the old ways. The majority of the English residents at the settlement, together with many of the more intelligent half-breeds, worship in the church of which a sketch has been given above (Archdeacon Hunter's), or in that under the care of Bishop Anderson, given below. The bishop was absent from the settlement during our visit, and we did not have the pleasure of seeing or hearing him. The half-breeds and natives are for the most part Catholics, and their religious services are held in the large cathedral of St. Boniface, opposite Fort Garry. The Right Reverend the Bishop of St. Boniface, in the colony of Assiniboia, gave us extremely interesting accounts of the religious and educational establishments in his diocese. Bishop Tache has himself been in the country for fifteen years, and no unprejudiced observer can fail to see the fruits of his industry and pious zeal. His diocese is immense, and the care of the missions in the interior country where it extends, which are altogether heathen missions, is no small part of his self-denying and laborious work. Besides this, there is under his charge, and constituting the more engrossing division of his labor, the ministration and aid afforded to the Catholic population of Red River and neighborhood. A Canadian like themselves, their brother, therefore, and their friend, no outward circumstances restrict the influence which his character and high office enable him to exercise.

There are four parishes in Red River—St. Boniface, St. Norbert, St. Francis Xavier, St. Charles. St. Boniface includes within its limits the central and most populous part of the settlement. Mgr. J. N. Provencher was its first bishop, having landed at Fort Douglas about the middle of July, 1818. In two years was laid the foundation of the first religious edifice—a wooden chapel. The Church of St. Boniface, Bishop Tache's cathedral, now replaces it.

It is, perhaps, the finest, certainly the most imposing building in the settlement. It is 100 feet in length, 45 in breadth, and 40 in height, not reckoning the spire. In its two tinned and airy towers is a fine and well-matched peal of three bells, weighing upward of 1600 pounds.

In the rear of the cathedral, with a lower roof, is the dwelling of the bishop. He escorted us, by a rear entrance, through his house into the cathedral, on the occasion of our first visit to him, and a more striking surprise could not have been prepared for us. We came out by a door at the side of the altar, and there suddenly beheld pillared aisles, frescoed roof, and all the gorgeous paraphernalia with which the Mother Church solicits and attracts her communicants. To a nice taste the effect might have seemed a little gaudy, but when we learned that the Sisters of Charity and some of the Brothers had accomplished these decorations without aid or pattern, the offense passed; for piety takes rank above taste, or else what excuse have we for the bare walls, the stinky paint, to say nothing of the beggarly pinched ceremonial in some abodes of our enlightened Protestant worship? Indeed, of a Sunday or a fête day, when the church is thronged; when, after a successful hunt and safe return, the half-breeds gather to the cathedral in all their fanciful variety of dress, their brilliant sashes, and blue or white capotes; the dress of the women, too, not less brilliantly catching the eye, there is a sense of harmony gratified by this likeness and general prevalence of striking colors, which would never be elicited by the same throngs in a country meeting-house in New England. A tablet in the wall commemorates the piety and labors of the earliest bishop.

Bishop Tache's house is large, and he shared it, as well as his private residence, with his clergy, the Brothers of his schools, and some orphans. Formerly the boys' school of the Brothers of the Christian doctrine was kept in the bishop's house, but for a year or two now they have had possession of the building erected for them a few hundred feet north of the cathedral—seen in the sketch above. It was here that little Joe Role was schooled, and as the tuition is very low, and in some cases a gift, the school is well filled. The scholars are examined semi-annually, and we heard the most creditable reports of their proficiency in reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, grammar, history, sacred and secular, algebra, etc. The sleeping rooms of the little fellows were bedsteadless, but bedsteads were a luxury their parents were used to go without, and they enjoy their neat piles of blankets on the floor quite as well.

The convent belonging to the Sisters of Charity, known in Canada as the Gray Nuns, is in the foreground of the sketch of the Cathedral of St. Boniface. It is to the south of the cathedral, separated from it by a well-cultivated garden, through which, when we passed, some of the Sisters were at work, assisting and directing the labors of half a score of boys.

We were indebted to Bishop Tache for an introduction to the lady superior of the convent, and to her kindness for the opportunity of examining all parts of it. From garret to cellar it was full of interest. The building itself is a very spacious one, though still too small for all its uses. A large chapel was being erected dur-

ing the summer of our visit, and as the settlement grows other additions will be necessary. The amount of work done and of good accomplished by Sister Valade and the Gray Nuns under her direction is something remarkable. The current expenses of the convent are defrayed entirely by the proceeds of the labors of the nuns. In the garret of the convent we were shown the spinning-wheels with which they spin the material for their plain gray gowns, woven also by their own hand. Their fine garden, too, they till. The more accomplished among them give their leisure to fine embroideries and rich needlework, sold to visitors, or sent to Canada for sale. They board twenty or thirty girls, and, for compensation, give them an education beyond that of most district schools in the United States. The languages used are English and French, and the subjects principally taught are reading, spelling, the catechism, grammar, sacred history, arithmetic, geography, English history, Canadian history, ancient mythology, vocal music, and the piano-forte, as well as the doctrines and practices of the Catholic religion. Besides keeping a day-school for all the little girls of the parish desirous of instruction, they maintain and educate in a separate apartment fifteen or twenty poor orphan girls, without charge to any one except themselves. Nor is this the sum of their labors; they minister to the sick or afflicted of the parish unweariedly, and by their example of charity, industry, and economy, have wrought a perceptible change in the character of that class of the population over whom their care extends.

The neatness and order of the convent was apparent in every part. The uncarpeted floors were not waxed, but not an atom of dust lingered upon them. The kitchen was as neat as a New England housewife's after the morning's work is done, and when the sun lies on the floor and lights up the polished tins. Even the garret, where every thing was stowed, was in an orderly litter.

The lady superior conversed with us only in French, undefiled by the Canadian *patois*; but one of the nuns, whom no visitor several years ago to the Montreal convent has forgotten, and whose beauty nor the attraction of the world has turned aside from her life of self-denial and hidden labor, conversed with us in English, and left us without information on no point that we desired to know. After a general conversation in the large reception-room of the convent, hung with portraits of the bishops and of saints, and decorated with specimens of the handiwork of the nuns, and having also in one of its corners a sewing-machine of Wheeler and Wilson's patent, this beautiful nun conducted us to the music-room, and there entertained us with polkas, redowas, and marches, played by the more accomplished of the pupils. Strange sounds these; to us, flashes of the world, forsaken for months in the midst of its hurry and gayety, its life of cities and operas and art and trade and parades, its pomp and wealth and show;—to these Gray Nuns, dull gleams, perhaps, of an outer world,

resigned and forsaken for all the years of their lives.

In other rooms we listened to recitations, singing of the older and younger ones, heard the quick, bright answers of little half-breeds, recognizing the painted block letters which hold the knowledge and wisdom of the world; saw them march about the room in lock step, hymning nursery rhymes; listened to the story of one poor Indian girl left by her savage parents on the prairie to starve and die, a rope tied about her, cutting into her tender flesh and wearing away her life, but saved in her last hours for a longer and better life here; saw and heard other things of like tenor and character, too numerous to mention in these crowded pages, and left the convent with the benediction of the nuns. We, Christians of another name, were thankful that, although on another continent, he whom they called father we called Antichrist, here, at least, charity and the good works of a Christianity inspired elsewhere than at Rome, and at sources long forsaken by the successors of St. Peter, were making their secure and noiseless way.

In the parishes of St. Norbert, St. Francis Xavier, and St. Charles, there are also schools for boys and girls, under the charge of the pastor and the Sisters of Charity; in the first 31 boys and 29 girls, and in the second 13 boys and 26 girls. The population ministered to in St. Boniface parish is 1400; in the other three, the first two having each a chapel, a little more than 2000. At the extremity of Lake Manitoba there is still another chapel, for the convenience of thirty or forty families.

Let it be remembered that here there is no law and no general provision for education; that the houses for the most part are sparse, that the parents are careless and indifferent, and that, though the charge for education is but ten shillings a year, scarcely one child in ten pays for his schooling, while to insist on payment would drive two-thirds away.

There are seventeen schools in the settlement, generally under the supervision of the ministers of the denomination to which they belong. The parochial school of Archdeacon Hunter, under the charge of a gentleman from Dublin; Mr. Gunn's commercial boarding-school, whose scholars are, the most of them, the children of Presbyterians; the Rev. Messrs. Black, Taylor, and Chapman's schools; and three minor schools, under the supervision of the Episcopal ministers in different parishes besides those above mentioned, are the most important of them.

The Indian church, at the lower end of the settlement, is one of the peculiar features of Red River. It is mostly attended by Ojibbeway Indians, whose behavior is attentive and decorous. The singing, in which the soft, low voices of the Indian women join, led by a melodeon played by the wife of the minister, is very sweet. The prayers were read in English, the lessons in Ojibbeway, and the sermon in Cree.

Mr. Cowley, the minister, is not only a mis-



BISHOP ANDERSON'S CHURCH.

sionary, but also physician, judge, arbitrator, and adviser of the Indians. When the Indians require his services as doctor during the night, they quietly enter the parsonage door, which is never locked, make their way in the darkest night to the well-known stove-pipe leading from the sitting-room into his bedroom above, give two or three low Indian taps, and quietly await the result.

No one would doubt the value of these missions among the Indians who could see the contrast between those who have become Christianized and others who have not. Mr. Dawson tells of disgusting dog feasts and medicine dances held by prairie tribes on a Sunday, while he was there, within a mile and a half of their Christian altars. The next Sunday after leaving the settlement we spent at Pembina, and there witnessed a begging dance, and heard a begging oration from an Indian orator. Not so disgusting, to be sure, as a dog feast, but still sufficiently in contrast with the Sabbath rest which we had enjoyed the week before.

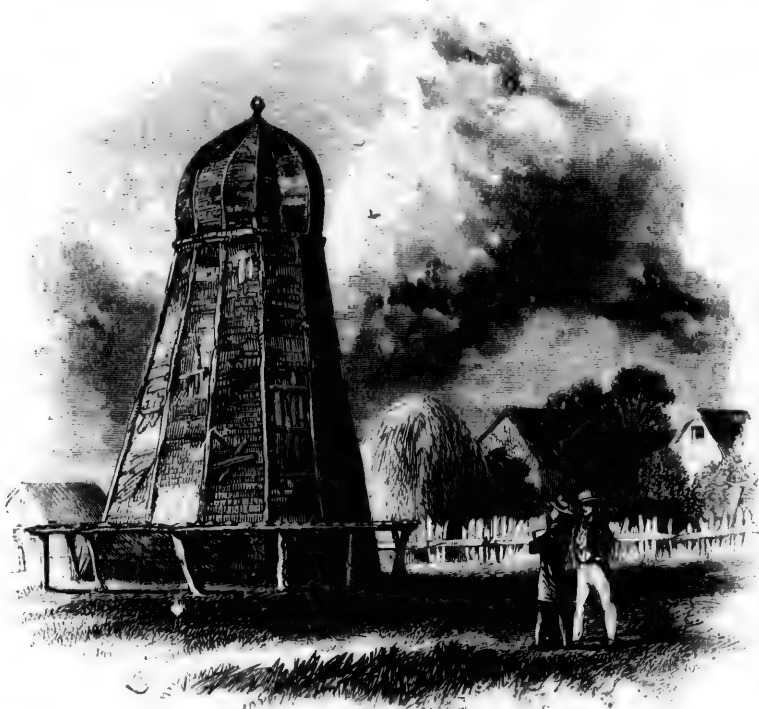
The population in Mr. Cowley's mission consists of about 500 baptized Indians and 203 heathen.

The relative proportion of these several classes is fairly shown in the census list of 1856, where the families are numbered as follows, according to their origin :

Rupert's Land, half-breeds and natives.....	816
Scotland.....	116
Canada.....	93
England.....	40
Ireland.....	13
Switzerland.....	2
Norway.....	1

The total population of the settlements on the Red River and the Assiniboine, in that year, amounted to 6523. Including those of Pembina, St. Joseph, and vicinity, and making allowance for the natural increase since the census was taken, it is probable that the number now reaches nearly 8000. There is a very distinct and well-preserved difference in faith between the population of the different parishes into which the settlements are divided. Some are almost exclusively Protestant; others equally Roman Catholic. In the last ten years there has been a considerable emigration of young men to the States and Canada; so that while in 1849 there were 137 more males than females in the settlement, there were in 1856 seventy-three more females than males.

The census roll of Red River has one curious blank in its pages. It has no enumeration of trades and occupations. Almost every man is his own carpenter, house-builder, wheel-wright, blacksmith, and all are either small farmers or hunters. Rock, suitable for grindstones, lies almost under their feet, but they for years have used those imported by the Hudson's Bay Company. Their pottery, too, is imported. There are about sixteen wind-mills, and half as many water-mills. The only steam (saw and grist) mill in the valley, which, as before said, stood idle while a rip-saw was dragged through heavy timbers under its very eaves, was burned down last June, the loss amounting to £1600; so ending another enterprise, with a fatality which seems to have been common wherever the pec-



OLD MILL (ONCE IN FORT DOUGLAS).

ple of the settlement have attempted to overcome the general stagnation. A model farm was once attempted there to show the native farmers what science applied to agriculture could accomplish. Mismanagement produced a miserable failure. The exploits of a Buffalo Wool Company are only remembered to be pitied; the sheep and tallow schemes, and the agricultural associations attempted, have likewise fallen through; and a fulling-mill completes the cast of abortive enterprises. Another steam-mill, however, will soon replace the old one.

The supplies of the Red River people were formerly imported for them through Hudson's Bay, at high charges, by the Company; but with the growth of our Western settlements, which are extended almost to northernmost Minnesota, they have been able to obtain them directly from the United States, which they visited in huge caravans, or through the traders who themselves visit St. Paul. The principal American traders are Norman W. Kittson, who has done more than any one else to open the trade, and J. W. Burbank and Co., now the proprietors in part of the *Anson Northup*.

These facts, and the immense extent of frontier not easily governed by custom-house regulations, will account for the large number of

merchant shops (fifty-six) enumerated in the last census.

Mr. Kittson's store, which has a fine position near the cathedral, and opposite Fort Garry, is very like other Yankee country stores; but in those of the minor or native traders the object seems to be to conceal rather than display their goods.

Besides the merchants, there is another class, called freighters, who row the heavy Mackinaw boats, and haul them and their loads over the portages between York Factory and Red River. There were fifty-five of these boats enumerated in the last census; on the next they will have become much diminished, from the change in the route of importation, although in the supplying of the northwestern districts some will be as indispensable as ever. The employment of Indians by the freighters was a matter of special prohibition only a few years ago, as introducing a kind of industry not compatible with hunting, and likely to direct attention from the fur trade. The shrewd reader may here see some clew to many mysterious facts in the condition of the Red River settlement, and of the Indian missions here and elsewhere in Rupert's Land.

The tenure of land in Assiniboia is singular. It is sometimes sold to purchasers at 7s. 6d. ster-

ling per acre, the title being conveyed under the form of a lease for 999 years. There are half a dozen conditions in the lease saving the interests, and profits, and control of the Company, which has been generally enforced. The condition that one-tenth of the land should be brought under cultivation in five years is observed or not, as may happen. In very many instances among the half-breed settlers, they did not know the number of their lots, the ground of their tenure, and had no document from the Company or any other authority. Some had paid, some had received land for services, some had squatted and were never disturbed, others had received it as a present from Sir George Simpson; and now, beyond the limits of the settlement on the river, no new squatter has any thing to pay.

The northward deflection of isothermals as you pass west of the great lakes, and toward the west coast of the continent, is a fact well known. Red River nobody supposes to be as cold as Labrador. It finds its parallel in the climates of the interior districts of Northern Europe and Asia. The summer temperature is high; the winter cold and severe. There is a plenty of rain in the summer months, a general absence of late spring and early autumn frosts. Professor Hind found, in 1855-'56, the summer of Red River four degrees warmer than that of Toronto, with 21.74 inches of rain in favor of Red River.

The natural division of the seasons for the climate of Red River is as follows:

Summer.—June, July, and August.

Autumn.—September and October.

Winter.—November, December, January, February, and March.

Spring.—April and May.

The summer temperature and the absence of frosts determine its fitness for agricultural purposes, and the splendid crops are the proof thereof.

The clear, dry atmosphere renders innocuous the very cold weather of winter. The half-breeds camp out on the plains, with only a few blankets and robes. Indian corn is a sure crop on the dry points of the Assiniboine and Red River, the horse-teeth and Mandan corn being the kinds most cultivated.

Wheat is the staple crop in the settlement. Forty bushels to the acre is a common return on new land, and in some cases the yield has been between fifty and sixty bushels. The grasshoppers, which have several times eaten up every green thing, are its only enemies.

Of hay the quantity is unlimited, and the quality excellent. Hops grow every where wild, and with the greatest luxuriance. Pease grow wild, and the yield is large. Potatoes are surpassed in size and quality by none that we are accustomed to find in Washington Market.

All kinds of root-crops grow well, and attain large dimensions; and all the garden vegetables which grow well in Canada and Northern New York flourish better in Assiniboine.

Flax, hemp, and tobacco are cultivated to some extent, the want of a market alone pre-



VIEW NEAR FORT GARRY.



OTTER TAIL TO CROW WING.

venting the first two from becoming most valuable exports.

Melons are cultivated in some of the gardens of the settlement with wonderful success; and the kitchen gardens of the Royal Canadian Rifles at Fort Garry, and of the Sisters of Charity over the river, would deserve prizes at an Illinois State Fair.

The limitless prairies environing the settlement are fragrant with the perfume of a thousand flowers; and in the thickets and long grass are strawberries, raspberries, sakatome berries, gooseberries, and prunes.

After remaining a week or more in the settlement, the changing of the weather, which was now beginning to have something of the chilliness of autumn, and the departure of the last trains of the half-breeds, made us think more intently of returning. One mild September afternoon, therefore, having first crossed the Stygian ferry, whereof the Charon is no Yankee, and bade adieu to friends at the fort, and to the bishop, and to Kittson and Cavalier, border-settlers who have begun to save the province from itself, and have also rescued Joe Rolette from his enemies, we remanded ourselves to the life

which we had left, and them all to the usual hibernation. We reached John Dace's by nightfall, and, the house being full, spread our blankets on the floor of his keeping-room, and slept till morning. The next day Joseph and I bestrode our horses, turned their heads southward, and with a smart gallop soon left the last house of the settlement hidden behind the billowy prairie grass, as the rounding waves hide the ships at sea. Before its chimney-pot had gone down, however, Joseph turned on the river bank, rose in his stirrups, and apostrophized the settlement in a manner which, as I stood and listened, brought tears to my eyes and a handkerchief to my nose. If the thermometer had been farther from 32° Fahrenheit not even the orator would have suspected the sincerity of my emotion. That day we traveled fifty-four miles, reaching Pembina after dark, exhausted, and feeling as if bifurcation had attained its maximum. The next day Joe Rolette came; he, too, certain, for twenty-four hours after dismounting, that the earth had ceased to rotate, but performed its journey around the sun with hard trotting on a macadamized orbit.

At Pembina we made our final preparations

for a solitary journey across the country to Crow Wing, on one of the upper tributaries of the Mississippi, bearing the same name. The Pembina postmaster—for even here the American Briareus extends one of his finger tips, and sorts the mails—concluded to accompany us, and by waiting for him benevolently a day, we were rewarded by a month's later mails, which came just in time not to be too late, with letters from home and friends, and news of the world without, whose attractive force, in spite of Kepler and Faraday, was in the ratio of the square of the distance.

One busy Monday morning, on the 19th of September, after a rainy Sunday, we ferried ourselves over the Red River of the North, swimming the horses, dragged our cart up its steep and muddy bank, and soon left the waters gleaming red in every wave under the bright sunshine, as it swept on to the frozen seas, far behind us.

The cart was light, the horses pretty well rested, and the law of the inverse ratio began to operate, so that a dog-trot became even Dan Rice's habitual gait. Twenty-five miles were put behind us the first day, and we came to camp by twilight on the wooded banks of a beautiful river. Rounding its curve we came in sight of a camp-fire, around which were huddled three Red Lake Indians—a father and his two sons. We fraternized directly, amazing them with a prodigal gift of tea, and saved the trouble of cooking our supper by being invited to share their huge kettle of boiled ducks. As far as we could learn they had supped twice already, but this did not prevent them from eating a third time. The old man, in the abundance of his hospitality, even tore strips from the sheet of white bark, which was all their shelter from the wind, to make torches for us, twisting the strip into a roll, impaling it diagonally on a stick thrust in the ground, and lighting its upper end. The engorgement of the red-skins convinced us of their honesty for the night, and we all slept with both eyes shut; and when we waked in the morning and found two of our four horses gone, we accused only the quadrupeds of theft. We scoured the woods and the prairies in vain, and finally set the Indians on the hunt, ourselves watching by the camp. The red leaves of autumn, like flakes of blood, drifted down from the branches of the trees, and floated away on the surface of the stream. The soft whirr of the wings of ducks alighting or flying was a foil to the solemn stillness in which the ungathered harvests fell before the silent sickle of the wind, and the pomp and summer glory of the year made ready for its winter shroud.

Before night one of the horses had been found, and the next afternoon an Indian messenger returned with another from Pembina in lieu of the one lost. We loaded our carts and traveled on for a few miles, camping beside a huge marsh. Two or three hours before daylight the postmaster awoke by chance, and aroused us with the cry of "Prairie on fire!" At the west of us

the whole sky was lit up with lurid fire. Great surging billows of smoke swelled up against the black, starless sky, their under sides reddened all over with the reflection from the flames below. The wind was blowing almost directly upon us, and we could feel the gusts of hot wind every moment alternating with the cool night breeze. It was easy to see that the fire was gaining upon us rapidly. While we stood gazing the swift flames had come so fast and far that we could already see their fiery tips flickering above the green grass, a long advancing line stretching far away to the northward. Every moment the devouring lips came nearer, and lifted themselves higher, and the huge molten billows swept on toward us in vast volume and solid phalanx, as if to engulf us and plunge us in the conflagration below. There was no time to be lost. We found the horses, that were all standing fascinated by the glare, and beginning to tremble with excitement and fright, harnessed and saddled them, turned their heads to the south, obliquely away from the direction of the wind, and at the end of an hour's fast riding were past the limit of its southernmost line.

Red Lake River is the largest of the tributaries of Red River, excepting only the Assiniboine. Indeed it bears the same relation to the Red River above its mouth as the Missouri to the Upper Mississippi. It is itself the main stream. We came to its banks one afternoon, at the spot figured in the sketch below, dined, and then attempted the passage. The water was high, and the river wide. By wading it on horseback we soon found the easiest spot to cross. It was necessary to enter the stream from a projecting spit of land, make head against its current for a few rods, then turn where the deep channel was narrowest, wade through it, and keep on a long, shallow bar to the opposite shore. The force of the current in the deepest part was more than any but a strong man could stand against, and even over the shallow bar, to wade, was like forcing one's legs through dry sand.

We emptied the cart, laid bars on the top, piled our goods and chattels upon them, weighting the upper side so that the current might not tip the cart over, and, one of us standing upon the same side, with Dan Rice harnessed between the shafts, we entered the water. With coaxing and thrashing and shoving, Dan was induced to pull the cart up stream as far as the turning point, where we were to cross the deep channel. Feeling the force of the water against his legs, sideways, here, and anxious probably for his equine equilibrium, not another step would he budge, though we besought, and pulled, and solicited, and shoved, and thrashed, and dragged him, as we three best could, on horseback or up to armpit in the cold water. It was of no use; Dan could not or would not go on: there was nothing left, therefore, but to drive him back, and try one of the other horses. But return was as bad as to go over. The obstinate brute would move in no direction, and for aught we could see seemed willing to stand in his tracks till the



FORDING RED LAKE RIVER.

waters had washed him, piecemeal, from off the face of the earth. We all then jumped into the water, unharnessed the balky wretch, backed the cart down the stream to the shore, and led Dan out. The other horses failed from sheer weakness. Each did his best, but got no further than Dan had tried to go. Indeed a little black horse came nearer drowning than swimming. The current knocked out his legs from under him, and had not Joseph lifted his nose above water by jumping on the hinder end of the cart, we should have had four legs the less to get home with.

The afternoon was already more than half gone; the horses too tired to be ridden back and forth through the water any longer with safety; and Joseph, not in good health, had already ex-

ceeded prudence; so it only remained for the postmaster and myself to shoulder our bags and boxes and ferry them over bipedally. Superfluities had no chance of transportation—that terrible strain upon the muscles could be endured only for what was necessary to take us to civilization again, so that it was only for guns, pemmican, blankets, and frying-pans, and not at all for dressing-cases, steel-pen coats, and French mirrors that we terebrated the stony bottom of the river with our great toes and blistered the soles of our feet. Last of all we took the cart to pieces, and with a long rope, of which we both had hold, floated over successively the box and wheels. One feather's-weight more must have swept us down the river.



OTTER TAIL CITY.

In two or three days more of rapid travel, crossing Sand Hill, Rice, and Buffalo rivers, we reached the Leaf Mountains, seen at the north of us when we were near Osakis Lake, left two more of our horses exhausted on the way; and at the end of another day's journey came to Detroit Lake, a fine sheet of water, skirted by a noble forest. The trail led us for twelve miles through its delightful shade. We loaded our cart with pigeons and partridges, shot *en passant*, discarding here the last of our pemmican, and the next noon dined at Otter Tail City, the whole of which is seen in the cut above. Six miles further on we came to Leaf City (houses one, population one), slept within four walls, rested a day while the rain poured, and on the 1st day of October, through sloughs innumerable and fathomless, came to the Crow Wing crossing—a rope ferry over the river of the name—from which there was continuous water, not to Arctic, but to Tropic seas and the Atlantic.

One more day's journey brought us to the "Agency," where two or three thousand Chipewa Indians were assembled to receive their annual payment; and to Crow Wing, a thriving village on the Mississippi, just below the junction of the Crow Wing River, whence stages, steamboats, and railway cars, soon carried us to our respective homes.

I have just space to append a few statistical items: Four years ago the Red River Settlement contained

Houses.....	322	Churches.....	9
Stables.....	1232	Shops, stores, etc.....	56
Barns.....	396	Schools.....	17

—making 2635 buildings in all.

The live stock is as follows:

Horses.....	1603	Cows.....	5593
Mares.....	1236	Calves.....	2644
Oxen.....	2736	Pigs.....	4674
Bulls.....	290	Sheep.....	2420

Of these there were lost, during the winter of 1855-56, 16 horses, 3 mares, 21 oxen, 16 cows, 43 sheep, 57 calves, 28 pigs.

The implements of the settlers curiously indicate their habits:

Plows.....	585	Canoes.....	522
Harrow.....	739	Boats.....	55
Carts.....	2075		

There are nearly 16,000 acres of land under cultivation.

The machinery in use in the settlement is very little, and mostly turned by natural forces.

Wind-mills.....	16	Carding-mills.....	1
Water-mills.....	9	Threshing-mills.....	5
Winnowing-machines.....	6	Reaping-machines.....	2

The average value of dwellings, linstock, implements, and machinery, is reckoned as follows:

Dwellings.....	£49,260
Linstock.....	52,401
Implements.....	5098
Machinery.....	3377
Total.....	£111,036

The grand total value of all that is above the soil of Red River then remaining at a little over half a million dollars, exclusive of the Company's forts and provisions.



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